AMERICA'S NEW MAGAZINE OF POPULAR ENTERTAINMENT

Mediascene

ISSUE 27 - $1.50

THIS ISSUE:

THE ANIMATED MAGIC OF
METAMORPHOSES

PREVIEWING JOHN BUSCEMA'S
NEW CONAN STRIP

DON McGREGOR STRIKES BACK
DRAGONFLAME

A HAUNTING TOUR OF THE
MAGIC CASTLE

FILMS COMICS MORE

SPECIAL!
STERANKO ESCAPES!
THE REAL MISTER MIRACLE REVEALS HIS PAST

WALTER GIBSON
CONJURES UP NORGIL

HARRY HOUDINI
AS THE MAN FROM BEYOND

SWORD & SORCERY
RETURNS TO THE CINEMA

A SUPERGRAPHICS PUBLICATION

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mediascene

Magic, mystery, mythology—all three form the core of the current issue of **MEDIASCENE**, one we believe will be received as an exciting change of pace from our usual fare.

The cover, painted over ten years ago for the jacket of Michael Moorcock's third Warrior of Mars novel, hopefully elicits images of the ample treasure trove that waits the adventure within these pages: demons, warriors, sorcery and surprises.

There was more than a little hocus-pocus involved in materializing the exclusive that leads off this issue, a new animated film titled **Metamorphoses**. Produced by San Rio, the soon to be released epic has been compared to **Fantasia** in theme and execution, yet, in its own way, is as vital as tomorrow's news. Human conflict is presented in terms of analogy, underscored with some of the most striking images since Disney's 1941 classic. The music of **Metamorphoses** will also have its impact on the American entertainment scene, composed and performed by a cross section of pop music's top musicians. The wave of t-shirts, books and other paraphernalia will follow shortly afterward. Our pictorial preview is the first tremor of that wave.

This issue's centerspread conjures up one of the many versions of the film's Medusa, and gives readers an idea of the kind of graphics that can be expected from the production. The art reproduced in our feature runs the gamut from the earliest conceptual renderings to character designs and backgrounds to actual frames from the film.

One of the most controversial figures in the contemporary comic scene has recently announced the publication of his first book. As an old and very close friend of ours, Don McGregor has granted us an inside look at the creation of the book, Sanpitar, between New Yorker and iron-clad iconoclast, McGregor delivers a revealing catharsis of the pains and passions that went into the development of **Dragonflame**. The new volume is the author's literary debut, perhaps the most important one of his life. His essay on how it all came about will sharpen reader's appetites to a razor's edge or turn them off completely—but *either* than to remain neutral. You'll see what we mean after digesting the how and why of **Dragonflame**.

Would any reference to magic and magicians be complete without a tip of the high silk hat to one of the most famous of all, Houdini? That man whose name is still synonymous with the art of magic *more than fifty years after his death* pursued a number of careers: escape artist, spiritualistic investigator, conjurer—and filmstar. This issue, **MEDIASCENE** focuses the amber spotlight on the Houdini of the cinema by way of one of the rarest items we've ever come across, a presspack from his first feature film, **The Man From Beyond**. A selection of material from that source (which appears to be missing from the [illegible] dozen or more Houdini books currently on the market) will throw a new light on a legendary figure, revealing a now-forgotten part of his spectacular life.

A decade or so ago, we found ourselves making like Houdini, to which the poster reproduced on our second cover will clearly attest. The following layout is a *first-time autobiographical account* of those dangerous days that were spent suspended upside down by our heels in a straitjacket or packed in a trunk that was doing its best to imbed itself into the bottom of a river.

That aspect of our career, which inspired the **Mister Miracle** series, has perhaps been ignored too long, and, we felt, may be of some interest to the readers of this magazine. As we checked through our files of old newspaper clippings, notes and other miscellaneous data, fragments of the past we hadn't thought of in years reappeared in the crystal ball of our memory. Some of those fragments are briefly recounted within these pages, along with a collective scrapbook of photos and images.

Walter Gibson, a close friend of Houdini and one of our favorite people is perhaps best known for his novels featuring The Shadow. As we've noted before in these pages, he is one of the most prolific writers to have ever exhausted a typewriter. And when he combines his vocation with his avocation, the art of magic, the results are bound to be memorable. Gibson is responsible for creating a number of magical protagonists, but the most well-known is his character, Norgil (the "g" is pronounced the same as in magic).

Recently, The Mysterious Press has republished eight of the original Norgil stories just as they appeared in the pages of Street & Smith's Crimebusters **Magazine** over thirty years ago. Sales on the book have been astoundingly successful, so much so that the second volume of tales is currently in the planning stages. The publisher also tells us that he sees no reason why the third book will not be issued to complete the series.

Herewith is the author's own recollection about the creation of the fast-acting wizard detective, along with the tricks and theatrics that were used to make it all work.

Hollywood is a place that makes fantasy come alive. The Magic Castle, in the heart of Hollywood, is one of those fantasies. Membership and admission to its passages and pleasures is essentially privileged, but one we felt was in keeping with the illusion projected this issue. Accept our personal invitation to tour the magical mansion's secrets together.

In a reversal of the customary procedure whereby the comics pick up on a cinematic trend, American filmmakers are beginning to borrow material from the familiar four-color form. Case in point—Sword and Sorcery stuff. The production of three of these new films is detailed in an explicit words and photo essay designed to reintroduce readers to the subject. Currently in various stages of production, **Conan, Sagan** and **Thongor** will give the comic and paperback crowd a method of comparison by which to measure their favorite heroes.

While we're on the subject, the sword and sorcery genre's foremost exponent is about to conquer yet another territory in his quest for adventure. Conan the Syndicated is soon to hack his way into the comic sections of newspapers across the country, and we are pleased to present a generous sampling of his premiere episode. Drawn by John Buscema, the examples selected are presented without captions or balloons in order that the dynamics of the art may be studied and appreciated solely for itself.

A final wave of the magic wand wraps up this issue with the latest news in the world of comics, accompanied by an advance look at next year's DC and Marvel covers.

Our forthcoming Holiday Special will highlight some of the most exciting art being done today—and the artists who are involved in creating it. Like to see a preview of one of the most important new visual publications due in the months ahead? **The Illustrated Roger Zelazny** with art in full color by Gray Morrow sets the issue's pace. An exhaustive interview with fantasy artist Mike Kaluta is also on tap, replete with unpublished art from his projected adaption of *Metropolis*. You know that Gil Kane and Jack Kirby both did comic book versions of **The Prisoner**—but *have you ever seen them?* You will next issue, along with a host of other surprises guaranteed to put you in the spirit of the season.

Now the magic show's about to begin. Take care.

STERANKO

MEDIASCENE BACK ISSUES FOR SALE!

No. 1 — Power packed premiere issue on BIG SAVAGE. Illustrated summary of Doc by Mike Ploog, Gene Colan, Stan Lathan, Marie Severin and Sorrentino. Big Doc Savage article spotlights the likes of Joseph Reese and reviews, issued off to gals and comic reproductions. Full-page Shadow panoramic plate by Ploog.

No. 2 — Special CAPTAIN MARVEL issue, featuring the story behind Fawcett's reunion with the Big Red Cheese. Illustrated with photos of artists and comics from the 40's and the 70's. Roddy Ray Von Hamel examines, along with articles on the Shazam saga. Known underground comic artist Jack Jackson's rare pictorial history of Fawcett.

No. 3 — Spooking HORROR COMICS issue, Issue #2 in the Mutant block and unique in the underground, all discussed and dissected in a definitive article, illustrated with dozens of vintage horror comic covers. Ploog's the weirdest, interviews graphic story by Starrett, artwork in the underground. Pictorial features on Horror Pulps.

No. 4 — BIRDS AND THE COMICS is the theme of this special issue that examines the role of comics and strip usage. The controversial 8-page pull-away story "The Black," by Bernard Krigstein. This issue, along with the story behind its creation. Plus rare views, articles, features, and behind-the-scenes material on Krigstein.

No. 5 — Special IMAGES AND ICONS issue. Great double issue has varying views, articles and art. Many before published illustrations by Adams, Ah So Lupoff, Smith, Kaluta, Ellis, Guiness and others. Defending articles on Comic and Monster. The Evolution of SF and Fantasies in the Comics, and more on the horror fantasy topic.

No. 6 — Big BURROUGHS issue, full of never-before-seen facts and pictures. An article on Burroughs of the Pulps is featured along with plus comic-spread reference of Barsoom. John Carter's long and fantastic career is recapped with rare pulp illustrations, comic notes, paperback reviews, films, records and radio CD and the package.

No. 7 — Colorful CRIME AND VIOLENCE issue, from Pacific Comics to Vampire Fangs, featuring Jacqueline comic and correspondent coverage. Interviews with Entertainer author Dan Mendleson, writing for crime thrillers by Max Collins and Clint Eastwood graphic Suspended issue is still one reader to go with this change to Mediascene.

No. 8 — Fantastic PIN-UP issue packed with a variety graphic history of gallery and from comics to underground to fashion. A thorough review of Martin Barron gallery. Big underground along with previews from the pros. Larger comics, fold-out and reader views are heavily the issue with exciting graphics in a new enlarged format.

No. 9 — Amazing ALL-HERO issue, featuring a photo-packed layout on the History of Our Heroic Interview with Jordan Gharbi, Jane Seaman, full-page map of Tarzan's Africa. Extensive conversation of his Jungle Lord, Tarzan Comics, Kibi, TV and excellent news about Lance, Flash Gordon, Attack #1 and the Spooky Mask.

No. 10 — SCIENCE FICTION issue, loaded illustrated by Williamson, Wood, Krigs, Ellerston, more. Great double-sized packed with art and graphics, features, Adventure Comics color conversation in color. Bill of comics reviewed, Planet of the Apes, 2 on Ice, The Green of Electronic, Incredible Pulps, coming films. A galactic trailblazer!

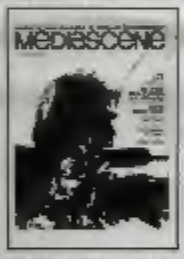
No. 11 Gold ADVENTURE issue for more enjoyment. Exciter films, the future of the Pulp Heroes Chronicle, Savage Sword, Marvel Chiefs on Chaka Khanes, Planet Pulps, Behind the Scenes at the National treasures. Rich, large 23-page feature, expanded cover writings, more column color with room-sized layout and layout contributed.

No. 12 — Big high issue, Special Preview of Godzilla in Japan Meets in Gold, Asbury Pulpfest of Horror Days in Town With the Gold on Sale, The Mistress of Mystery, Agatha Christie and her Miss Marple On The Orient Express, new issues box of Lucky Boxes, The Gangbusters in Film and Fiction, colorful cover-spread poster, art covers, film.

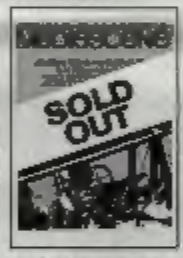
No. 13 — All ACTION issue, packed with photo coverage of The Great Movie Posters, Phantom of the Paradise, and The Legend of Billy Jack, Surreal Feature on The Return of Sherlock Holmes with heroic conversation poster in color, Photo Parade of the new Movie play spectacular, paperbacks, more media news, TV, heroes, adventure!

No. 14 — Powerful ALL-PULP issue, featuring the most nervous heroes in Fiction. The Issues Behind the Shadow series by his creator, Walter Gibson; Spectacular cover-illustrated terrorizing the Doc Savage and Shadow fan clubs, in-depth feature on the Origins of Pulp Heroes, Shadow of Tomorrow, Edgar Rice Burroughs, more.

No. 15 — Double-sized COMICS issue. Vaughn Bode's startling self-portrait in words and pictures, his most famous comic, a pioneering look at Spain Rodriguez, illustrated with 4-page color conversation special feature on Jack Kirby's career in Horror with exclusive illustrated print of Jay Anacleto, The Art of Neal Adams with a full-page Batman



No. 16 — Special ARTISTS issue. The full story behind the Gil Kane, Berni and Corben graphic novels. Master of the Monster, Steve Englehart, reveals his influences and explorations in a candid interview. Four Tributes to Imagine Bode with an unpublished portrait by Vincent Di Fate, plus features on Royal Flash, expanded interviews on current comics



No. 17 — Dynamic ART issue, featuring The Killer Shoes, a look at the flying leagues of WWII in comics, pulps and films, with a color Giordano conversation; Edgar Rice Burroughs centennial portfolio by Frank Frazetta, the Case against Superman by Jerry Siegel, interview of Logan's Run, reviews, films, more.

No. 18 — Psychedelic FILM issue spotlighting The El Topo! Pulse with cover explorations: How I Read The Shadow by Burrough illustrated with previously unpublished art; Behind The Mask, origins of the great Pulp Heroes, The Shadow of the Comics, introducing Chandler on psychog, new visual comic, more.

No. 19 — The SCREEN AVENGERS issue over with an exciting two and four. Illed 16-page feature on the Movie and Heroes of the Saturday afternoon serials including The Spider, Flash Gordon, The Phantom Creeps, America, The Phantom, Ace Drummond, scores of others. Comics, Dick Tracy remembered.

No. 20 — SWORD AND SORCERY SPECTACULAR with a new Robert color cover B & B in the Cinema; a Conan Corum by Robert E. Howard; Jack KIRBY Fire Kingdom with illustrated page; Wonder Woman King Kenyon, the Magnus of Heroes Earth, full-color conversation by Brennan Comics, Uncle Sam!

No. 21 — A FILM ANIMATION SPECIAL featuring the history of the cartoon from Winsor and Disney to the present. Bob Clampett's Jack Carter of Mars, Rocky, the Bullwinkle and friends, Phillies as the Tiger Sequence Animation, Chuck Jones Bugs Bunny salute to Warner Bros. Cartoon archive across Miami!

No. 22 — Sensational STAR WARS encyclopedia, packed with color comic book production paintings, storyboard on sale a color-packed conversation with Marvel's Star Wars comic. Superman of the Cinema, King Kong trailer on Ralph Bakshi's Wizards, sci-fi film previews, comics, films and more news.

No. 23 — The SUPER WOMEN, from Charles Angels to Wonder Woman. An exclusive interview with Marvel's mental artists search and Nancy Pasqual Digital color conversation. The future of the Warrior, collecting original art, why and how, the Kirbey School revisited, scarce, media and more.

No. 24 — Famous FANTASY, with crew saved and survive in the covers and his own Stroked film. An authentic interview with Carmi, a fact and photo Ed Wood update. The Diver Burns revisited Night Monster, Attack! new B&S fans. Vaniel preview conferenced, an eye-popping Red Sonja photo feature

No 25 — DUCKS, from Donald to Howard, and a legion of Sunny animal theorists. Carl Barks and his Uncle Scrooge are featured, along with the furry issues of Angus Fagging. The Life and Times of Barnyard Black, the salacious Don Adams race Thunder, Bad Bone Gerry shows his best art.

No. 26 — Blasting STAR WARS follow-up issue, filled with more before released art, unveiled in a new color cover and panoramic conversation. There are also glimpses of the new Superman film, Marvel's TV heroes. The Star Wars That Never Were, sci-fi film news, comics, movies and much, much more.

No. 27 — Mystifying MAGIC issue, featuring Starwalk's successful interactive feature on tricks and success. Also, features on Mongo the Magician of Horror Orbeon, The Magic Castle, the Conan, Bagan and Thorpe films, Don McGregor's Dragonfighter with Gulliver art, Gray Morrow's illustrated Dickens issue.

MEDIASCENE has become the magazine of comics, film, science-fiction and fantasy entertainment. We examine newer views, first and first with behind the behind facts and information, personalities in the news as and places seldom anywhere. Now entering its third year of publication, **MEDIASCENE** is reaching a larger audience, and featuring more exclusive material than ever before, from both the major comic book companies and the most imaginative new filmmakers in Hollywood. Our features on Star Wars, Close Encounters and Superman, literally scooped the nation, and we promise more of the same in the future. Upcoming issues will feature in-depth movie reports, as well as art by Ricky Shanklin, Wood, Buscema, Colan, Gene Colan and Richard Corben.

MEDIASCENE BACK ISSUES ARE IN SHORT SUPPLY - GET YOURS WHILE THEY LAST!

METAMORPHOSES

It has been said that animation is the perfect expression of the filmic art. On that small, yet cogent, remark rests a number of valid preconceptions. To appreciate the accuracy of this controversial statement, it is necessary to simply view one of the masterpieces of the form (either seven jam-packed minutes of Warner Bros. madness cooked up by Bugs Bunny and company or a feature-length excursion into fancy courtesy of Uncle Walt). Once this is done, the sense of freshness and abandon present in San Rio's production of **Metamorphoses** will surely find acceptance.

Metamorphoses is unlike any other animated feature film. A unique interpretation of mythology, it is gaining the reputation of a "rock version of **Fantasia**," a reputation which is based primarily on hints and unsubstantiated speculations concerning the content of the film. **Metamorphoses** is, as a closer examination of its title will reveal, an interpretation of Ovid's classic mythological treatise on human nature. Yes, it is true that writer/director Takashi chose to make a film without dialogue. But this does not make it a "fantasia." Again, it is true that Takashi selected music performed by Joan Baez, The Pointer Sisters and the Rolling Stones from new compositions to compliment the visual storytelling of **Metamorphoses**. Even this does not qualify the film for that comparative status. What becomes increasingly apparent, as the real qualities of the film are examined, is that **Metamorphoses** is a totally unique experience.

Utilizing the discipline of pantomime in order to convey the mythic or narrative content of several tales by Ovid, Takashi is trying to present **Metamorphoses** as a universal film removed from the constraints of convention. By eliminating dialogue from the film, it is hoped that the animation complimented by the music will suffice to explain the various dramatic situations. Even at that, Takashi is not really interested in telling a story. "It is better to feel the film rather than try to follow a specific plot line." Coming from a background that had a strong basis in graphic design, Takashi has made this, his first feature film effort, an experiment and labor of love. After the initial title sequence there are no subtitles or separations leading from one mythological story to another. The film is an ongoing metamorphosis, constantly changing, flamboyant and wildly beautiful, and at times completely esoteric.

It is rare to find a film that is both complex and ultimately simple at the same time. San Rio's **Metamorphoses** manages to do exactly that. The film focuses on a pair of extremely cute animated characters, a boy and a girl, as they rove and discover their brave new world.

These characters are used in each sequence to provide a link through the sequences. They are complimented by all sorts of wild creatures and inventions giving the whole film a baroque point of view. Following a stark and highly stylized creation sequence, mankind wanders over the barren landscape of a primitive earth. This vacant, almost dead world gives way to a bright and beautiful woodland. It is here that **Metamorphoses'** archetypal characters are introduced for the first time.

In this creation myth, a young hunter is marveling at the wonders of nature. His attempts to destroy and pervert this innocent landscape into a den of predatory pleasure is met with failure and abuse. An attack by a wild boar climaxes his introduction to this new environment.

Moving on, spurred more by curiosity than instinct, the young man stumbles onto the goddess of nature bathing in a secluded stream. He watches with fascination as her Tinkerbell-impish handmaidens frolic in the swirling waters surrounding her. This idyllic scene is shattered when the goddess notices the intruder. To punish this mortal for witnessing such a display of godly ecstasy, the youthful wanderer is turned into a fawn. His new existence at first is interesting and relatively relaxed. In a matter of minutes, however, his reality is turned into terror. A pack of hunting dogs chase him from the woods into an even more barren landscape than at the beginning of the film. The mood has changed quickly from one of innocence to terror.

"It is better to feel the film, rather than to follow a specific plot line."

It is this ability to channel emotions that epitomizes **Metamorphoses**. From the morbid after-shock of destruction the film segues to the revelries of a marriage celebration. As is common in mythological storytelling, Fate rears its ugly head and carries off the young bride to Hades. Not satisfied at this situation, the young husband, Orpheus, journeys to hell to bring back his wife. His journey is perilous, and, after dealing with the frightening visions which characterized this nightmarish land, his dreams of reunion are shattered even as he turns back to assist his wife on their exodus from the unholy lands.

This is followed by an ethical tale of greed and jealousy—an unAesopian parable known as The House of Envy. Sibling rivalry is carried to the extreme as ancient gods intervene to turn one exceptionally vile and thoughtless sister into the hideous personification of her blackened soul.

True to its mythological source the film eventually focuses on one of the classic myths—the legend of Medusa. This sequence brings Perseus to the isle of the Gorgons and is the only tale that ends on a happy note (unless your precivi-

ties lead you to root for the Gorgons).

The first sequence follows the efforts of a young, ambitious peasant to steer Apollo's chariot and ride across the sky. His efforts and skills appear to be lacking and he pilots the beautiful vehicle to his wild and terrifying death.

In these subsequent tales which range from Orpheus in Hades to Perseus and Medusa the element of change is vividly explored. Nowhere better can this ability to metamorphose be more fully realized than through the medium selected by Takashi. It is through animation that Takashi was able to select his backgrounds and the exact movements required by his cast of characters. He controlled the color, he controlled the physical appearance (both grotesque and idyllic) of the people and gods, he even controlled the pace at which events would be seen. With all of the control, **Metamorphoses** becomes an intimate interpretation of Greco-Roman mythology: a realization of ancient stories through animation, a medium experiencing a recent renaissance.

This three million dollar project is graced with some of the most incredible artwork ever seen in an animated feature film. The backgrounds are lush to the point of fetishism; their detail and depth is astounding. There is a quality to these backgrounds that has not been seen in animation since the golden days of the feature-length cartoons from the Disney studio. There is a need to imbue these various backgrounds with mystery and incidiness. Even the beautiful green forests are slightly too perfect to be real. This idealization of the environment allows the characters a freedom to explore, which lets the viewer explore at the same time.

But the backgrounds are not the only element that demands attention. The character design of many of the supporting grotesques is masterful. Mike Ploog, whose work distinguished the film **Wizards**, was responsible for a number of the more bizarre characters and slimy creatures. His witch in the House of Envy sequence is evil personified.

To single out individuals as prime factors in the aesthetic construction of San Rio's **Metamorphoses** is self-defeating. Takashi directed the film as an ensemble. He would describe what he wanted. He gave his sequence directors the raw material and allowed them to work their specific magic on these mythological stories, translating them into animated sequences. As can be gleaned from this simple description, the process of creating the film was long and quite involved.

The animators were selected and underwent a training session. They were asked to interpret mythology from a particular point of view. They were asked to create an objective correlative for stories that are as old as Western civilization. The anthology format has its advantages in a situation such as this. Essentially **Metamorphoses** is a silent movie. It is constructed much in the same manner as films in the early part of the twentieth century. The actors, in this case animated characters, are asked to interpret various stories without dialogue. This effort is then supported with music. The same way as "silent" films were presented during their period.

A typical question always arises concerning the music in the film. Names like Joan Baez, The Pointer Sisters and The Rolling Stones are formidable in the music industry. The simple truth is that these artists were approached with a presentation of **Metamorphoses** and agreed to provide songs for various sequences. Joan Baez's mournful voice is heard over the creation sequence. This added dimension of music, especially the primal sound of Baez, gives the opening a feeling of solitude that the filmic images could not accomplish alone. The Pointer Sisters' coquettish brand of music is the perfect accompaniment to Orpheus' tempting journey through Hades. The Rolling Stones provide the music for the final spectacular visual explosion of the chariot sequence.

METAMORPHOSES is at once the complete opposite and logical successor to FANTASIA.

These major musical figures do not provide the only music in the film. On the contrary, the film bristles with music, the majority of it coming from Billy Goldenberg. He gives the film a popular jazz score. His music interprets the physical movements of the characters — the music of Baez, at times, forming at times a juxtaposition or re-affirmation of the actual story-telling event. With this functioning score, the music has an ever-present "upbeat" quality.

Metamorphoses, is the most experimental animated feature film to come along in years. It manipulates the form. Takashi has performed this by giving the viewer icons that can be related to easily. These typical creatures are then the lures by which the director turns the viewer on and off. He works at times on a subliminal level. Dealing with color and space, Takashi creates real anxieties and emotional participation. It is this participation with **Metamorphoses** which distinguishes it from other experimental films, such as Oskahi's **Heavy Traffic** which combined live-action and animation to create his distinctive environment.

There is an incredible dichotomy created by this style of animated filmmaking. It is difficult at first to accept the "Walt Kelly-esque" creatures functioning on the same reality with highly realistic images and backgrounds in a fashion like Howard the Duck. (If one can accept this vague analogy). The lack of a suspension of disbelief causes an immediate imbalance. Once this situation can be resolved, **Metamorphoses** functions on its own aesthetic conventions. It is not far afield to call the film baroque. The sequence of Orpheus in Hades attests to that.

In this particular sequence, Orpheus seeking his Eurydice wanders through a labyrinth filled with miraculous treasures, each one more tempting than the last. It is during this journey that Orpheus stumbles into a cavern filled with candy and sweet delicacies from the twentieth century.

Calling the film baroque does not completely cover over the apparent problems of acceptance by certain test audiences. The format of **Metamorphoses** leaves the viewer on a level of attempting to justify murder and many other of the darker traits of humanity.

To understand **Metamorphoses** is to understand Takashi. He is an artist trying to deal with a particular aesthetic. In the creative medium of film, one must rely on a number of individuals to bring specific ideas and goals to their ultimate and logical conclusions. Takashi has confessed **Metamorphoses** is difficult for some to digest. It goes without saying that if an audience views the film looking for the mindless abstractions of Disney's **Fantasia** or the parody and slap-stick devices of **Allegro Non Troppo** it will be shocked.

There is a certain coolness surrounding the film. It is hoped that by the time San Rio is ready to release the film to the public (hopefully in late 1977 or early 1978) that enough discussion will be given to relieve any misgivings the film might have picked up along the way. Takashi has talked of **Metamorphoses** as an event. "It would be nice to see the film in a concert situation. It would be projected while live performers supplied the musical accompaniment on stage." This project may never occur, yet it gives an interesting sidelight into Takashi's character.

Visually, **Metamorphoses** is a stunning work, filled with images of power and incredible force. The only way it can be described is as an event. It will be presented in an ultra-wide-screen process and stereophonic sound. The content and the intent of the film work in diverse means. Both approach the subject of universality through different means. The success of the film depends on the ability to suspend disbelief and move to the rhythms of the characters and music. It is at once the complete opposite and logical successor to Disney's **Fantasia**. In any event, it will not be threaded through the mill as just another protracted animated jumble. Takashi waves his magic wand and images snap to attention carrying viewers into a world created on dissonance and harmony.

Metamorphoses is a contradiction and an answer to the cynics who think animation is dead. ●

Carl Macek

BARRY SMITH

A DRAMATIC NEW DIRECTION, AN EXCITING NEW STYLE, A SENSATIONAL NEW PRINT!

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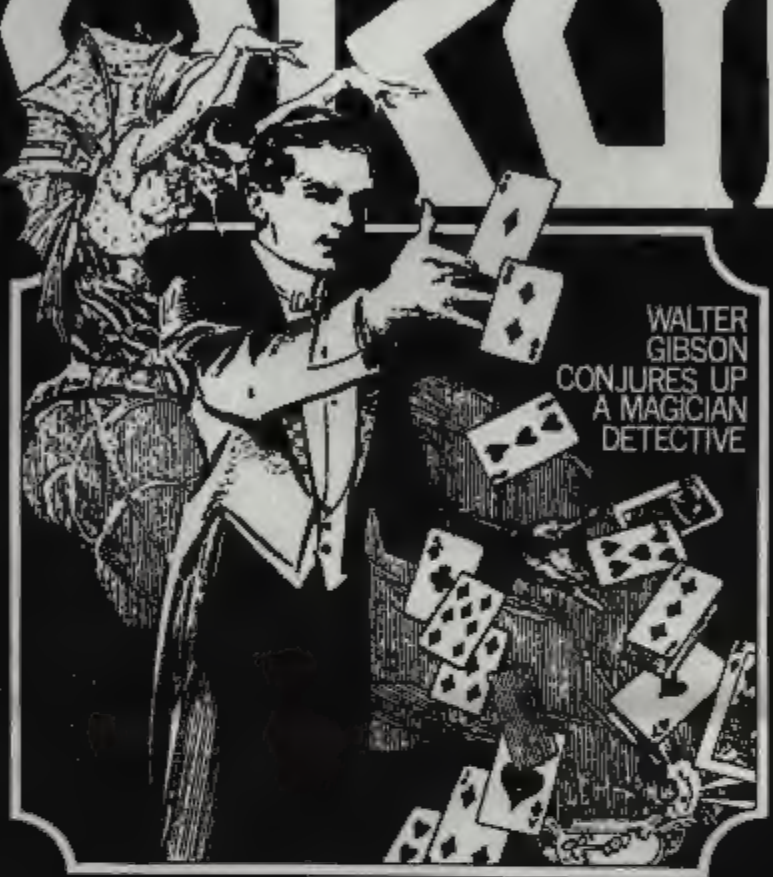
FATE SOWING THE STARS

Somewhere beyond reality, at a place where time and eternity intertwine, the gods hold council. The universe is hushed. The past and the present coalesce as Fate, the Enchantress, scatters the obsidian heavens with a symphony of stellar light. At her feet, rest the forces of chaos and order, their destinies momentarily stilled by the luminous vision of the cosmic ocean.

BARRY SMITH captures that moment in a breathtaking new print which marks a startling highpoint in a career embellished with achievement. For the first time, SMITH summons the *full power of his talent and vision* to produce a major work, rendered in oil paint, of epic scope and dimension. The classic approach, the meticulous attention to detail, the affinity for weaponry and accoutrement are clearly apparent as is SMITH's discovery, exploration and mastery of oil painting. The result transcends the limits of the artist's previous fine work with a creation rich in composition, design and concept, one that is compellingly alive with a rainbow of iridescent color.

Fate Sowing the Stars is 18" square with an elegant gold border, printed on heavy enamel cover stock, and available at $5 plus $1 for mailing insured and flat in cardboard. The excitement of **Rann and the Peacock**, the timelessness of **Devil's Lake** and the beauty of **Pandora** in a single fantastic work of art—captured forever by BARRY SMITH.

NORGIL



WALTER GIBSON CONJURES UP A MAGICIAN DETECTIVE

Magic and mystery are so closely interwoven that it is hard to tell where one leaves off and the other begins, or visa versa. From the literary standpoint, this makes it very difficult to blend the two, without favoring one at the expense of the other. Perhaps the most pressing problem was how to balance fact against fiction, since the slightest shift of weight in the wrong direction could tester the whole works into a landslide. Professional magicians themselves were faced by this dilemma, back at the turn of the century, a most notable example being that Harry Keller, who took over as America's leading magician following the demise of Herrmann the Great in 1896.

Keller advertised his show with huge lithographs depicting h m surrounded by devils ranging in size from a full-fledged Mephistopheles down to lesser imps who perched on his shoulder or sat at his feet, poring over books of magic. These had a two-way effect upon the general public. In large cities, many customers were attracted by the theater actually expecting to see some of Keller's satanic assistants, while in smaller towns, many people shunned the show, rather than come under the baneful influence of the Evil One.

When Houdini switched from vaudeville to appear in movie thrillers during the era of the silent screen, he called upon the now famous fantasy writer, H. P. Lovecraft, to "ghost" some incredible adventures for **Weird Tales**, one being a first-hand account of a night that Houdini allegedly spent deep in the Great Pyramid of Egypt. A few years later, when Houdini abandoned his brief movie career to take out a full evening magic show, he deputized me to describe his most dangerous true life escapades, which I had just completed at the time of his death on October 31, 1926.

Shortly afterwards, I took up mystery writing on my own and developed a character called The Shadow, whose fictional adventures, appearing in a magazine of the same title, were to keep me considerably occupied for nearly twenty years, during which period I turned out 282 Shadow novels under the pen name of Maxwell Grant.

My backlog of magical experience was helpful in creating both situation and devices for The Shadow, who frequently vanished from the midst of attacking crooks or arrived suddenly from nowhere to wreak vengeance on evil-doers. He also specialized in quick changes, discarding his black cloak and slouch hat to assume the role of Lamont Cranston, a debonair club man, or to appear in some other guise that suited his immediate need. But often, as I applied those touches, my thoughts reverted to the possibilities of a magician detective who would be confronted with situations that could only be resolved by using his own devices.

From long and continued association with many professional magicians, I felt that the best way to involve such a character in a mystery story or crime case was to precipitate him into the midst of it and have him wrangle his way out in truly magical fashion. Treated from backstage angle, this offered a wide range of intriguing prospects that could be built into a series of novels.

Character magazines were already in abundance, with others in the planning stage, which meant that my magician-detective would have to wait his turn, if it even came at all. The big question as Mr. Ralston put it was that there was less than a fifty-fifty chance that a new character would gain sufficient readership to show a profit, so until someone devised a way of testing popular appeal, it was better to hold off than risk the loss of the initial investment.

With the average character magazine of **The Shadow's** type, the trend was to cut the lead novel to about half the length of the magazine, filling the remaining pages with short stories. Why not carry that trend still further, by reducing the novel to one-third, eliminating the shorts entirely and replacing them with two other novels, each involving a different character? This would give the reader three novels for the price of one, a bargain that many buyers would find hard to resist. Not only would that increase the magazine's chance for success, it would serve as a proving ground to test the popularity of new characters. By polling the opinions of readers, the character who proved most popular could be promoted to a magazine of his own and a newcomer could be introduced to replace him.

That was early in 1936, just five years after I had written my first Shadow novel. In the fall the first Shadow radio show went on the air, featuring Lamont Cranston with other personages from the magazine stories, and proved an immediate success. That spurred a new demand for more character novels and early in 1937, Street & Smith launched the new magazine that I had suggested under the title of **Crime Busters**, but instead of featuring three novel-length stories, they ran eight-and later nine-novelettes.

I was called on for a magician story for the first issue, so I gave my character the name Norgil, which he formed by juggling the letters of his actual name, which was Loring. He also could change it into Ling Ro, a title which he used when called upon to perform wizardry in Chinese costume. Since The Shadow's popularity was at a peak and Street & Smith had earlier contracted to take my entire output of mystery fiction, I used my pen name of Maxwell Grant with the Norgil stories as well, partly on the assumption that it would help the sale of **Crime Busters**, which it may have, for the new magazine sold well from the start. Later its title was changed to **Mystery Magazine** and I continued with the paper shortage of World War I.

Norgil himself had so many prototypes that many of his stories suggested themselves automatically. Like Blackstone or Calvert, both headliners at the time, he could switch from fifty-minute shows at movie houses to a full evening extravaganza, with an enlarged company. He also had a counterpart in Russell Swann, who played deluxe hotels in New York, Washington, San Francisco, and even London. That put him into society circles and lecture circuits like Dunninger, the mind reader, and Dr. Harlan Tarbell, author of a famous magic course.

Norgil's occasional switch to the character of Ling Ro was inspired by George Rauchsling, who did a Chinese act under the name of Rush Ling Toy and also doubled in a quick change act—often on the same program!—as LaFollette, the Man of Many Faces. Nor was Norgil averse to donning Hindu robes and appearing as a Hindu mystic like Rajah Raboid; and when occasion demanded he could stage a midnight spook show, rivaling the real-life Doctor Nafi.

Like Houdini, Norgil would frequently bring business to the theater by doing an overboard box escape from the bottom of a river, but despite all that, I had still greater plans for Norgil I hoped to send him on a world tour, emulating such Greats as Raymond and Carter. But that time never came. Instead, I kept him in the U. S. A., where he frequently was seen at magical conventions as a shimming example for such future wonders workers as Mark Wilson and Doug Henning.

One final note: Some critic have felt that Norgil was a trifle lax in his choice of a stage name, as there can be confusion as to its correct pronunciation, the "g" being soft as in "forge not hard as in "morgue." They should be reminded that the Great Houdini was caught in the same bind when he borrowed the name of a French prestidigitateur, Robert Houdin, and added an "i" to it. For a time, some people insisted on calling him "Hoo-dan-eye" instead of "Hoo-dee-knee," but his fame increased to the point where everyone came to his way of thinking.

When you think of magic think of Norgil. The "g" is the same in both, just as the G. of Gibson is the same as in Grant.

Walter Gibson

METAMORPHOSES

FIVE FANTASTIC VOYAGES!

Philippe Druillet is more than just a comic artist, he does a dream-weave. He's also an absolutely stylish poet, designer and mischief. In his stories, gaseous wraps, metal beasties, color rages and hypers or multiple beings have roaring galaxies there are five full-color Druillet books, just imported from France, and packed with devastating visual spectacular.

The 3 Voyages of Lone Sloane is an award-winning odyssey through a tortured mechanistic universe. Delirius is a chronicle of cosmic warfare in a geometric Bodoni and Gomorrah. Yragael is a tale of swords and sorcery on a gigantic psionic scale, which combines with its sequel, Use the Void, to weave an awesome epic of cosmic vengeance and destruction. The Night is Druillet's penultimate personal concept, filling thousands of spacebore cyclists against Death itself. These 64" x 11" volumes are gargantuan and printed in French, with approximately 70 full-color pages for $3.50 plus $2 postage each. Easily the most shattering graphic science-fantasy series ever published!

Jacques Boyer's Mœbius pits gigantic insect rabbits and psychedelic cosmic screwballers between total pulchritude as power as a matter of time, and conceptual reality fluctuations. Illustrated symbiosis of man-world, total-filled hidden psychedelic detail, technicolor hues of nightmarish landscapes, color and a Kierkegaard mystical paranoiacal climb, being weep-imagination. Visual is a case of the bestial, machinery and science, nature, magic, dreams, and the creatures are lightning, darkness and swamps, all the characters is mutants. Utterly caught accented for the [illegible] provided by buddy Boyer, breaking [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

DRAGONFLAME!

The sound of the word screams on the midnight wind.

It is a haunting cry that hints of terror and perverse fascination, like staring at the swaying cobra that is about to spit its venom.

It is a name the tabloids love. The **Daily News** dashes that image. The **New York Times** scorns it. The **New York Post** writes about his exploits illiterately.

Dragonflame!

A name to reckon with! A concept created out of contemporary conflicts.

Dragonflame is the central character in the lead piece in **Dragonflame And Other Bedtime Nightmares**, a special character and a special book. It has grown from that initial storyline concerning Dragonflame, and holds over 200 pages of short stories and novelettes. My editor, Dave Kraft, watched with bemused horror as the book grew, story by story. SF, Fantasy, Mainstream fiction. He did not take the growth stoically, with typical Gemini fervor; he railed at me emotionally as we missed deadlines and as type-setting costs doubled from the original estimates.

But with all the expansion, Dragonflame remains the central story.

If the tabloids would love Dragonflame's exploits, the powers that run the comic book establishment would hate him. He is a character and a concept that, quite likely, would seem incomprehensible to them. For while Dragonflame has the prerequisites of a costume and a masked visage, and while he often finds himself centrally located in a violent climate, and while he utilizes an arsenal of swords and Ghurka throwing knives in his shadowy midnight confrontations, the world through which he stalks is oftentimes darkly inhumane (people do get maimed, either physiologically or psychologically), and there are traces of incipient paranoia in the shadowy recesses of that night world. Dragon recognizes that there is a dichotomy between law and justice. In this complex society, with all its legal manouverings and financial shenanigans, guilty or not guilty is not always the foremost judgement. This schism between law and justice motivates much of what Dragonflame does.

So you won't find Dragonflame in the comic book pages. Not as the industry stands today. He can't be done. First, Dragon reflects a social rage that makes him act even as he questions his actions. Is he a fascist? And what the hell does that mean? Is he a throw-back to some idealistic past—Samaurai philosophy of ninjo and giri (humanity and duty), coming to grips with honor and integrity in the darker areas of Manhattan? Or is he a psychopath, as some of the papers suggest? He isn't sure. The only thing he is sure of is that he can't remain indecisive any longer.

Dragon's dark eyes have been deprivation.

And pain.

Photo by Jane Aruns

And waste.

The destruction of flesh and mind that he has witnessed is, in turn, destroying him.

Dragon has been battered and used by the individuals in his life as well as by many of the institutions he has served. He was raised in a world that taught him to respect and obey, almost without question, those very institutions. But that way of life won't work for him, not anymore.

Comics wouldn't touch Dragon with a gloved hand. Believe it.

On the other hand, Dragonflame is quite unlike most prose protagonists you might encounter. He does wear a costume of sorts. And inherent in his identity are concerns and delusions of heroism and integrity, humanity and anger, as well as that sense of mythology which is peculiar to comics (even if most comics have sacrificed that 20th-Century mythology these days, opting instead for formula and carbon-copy stereotypes and mimicked plotlines).

Dragonflame and Other Bedtime Nightmares reflects the past decade of my life.

True, Dragon has somewhat of a Dirty Harry flavor in execution, and there is something reminiscent of the Shadow about his endeavors, and it is obvious that he has had some exposure to such media personalities. His favorite comic strip is **Gasoline Alley**, which he reads daily, after surveying what new speculations the newspapers have written about him for that day. Dragon's world, unlike **Gasoline Alley**, or even the Shadow and Dirty Harry, is grayer than the concrete villainies that both the Shadow and Dirty Harry face, and if Dragon longs for that world that Skeezix and Joel and Rufus inhabit, it is a certainty that he lives in an environment much more complex. Violence does not readily resolve away evil. And even Dragon realizes that violence can seldom be dictated and controlled to affect only the ones you want stopped. His circumstances and environment are often-times cruel and chilling.

The one thing he will not do any longer is turn away and pretend he hasn't seen the corruption and hurt and lack of accountability on the behalf of political figures who are supposed to represent our best interests and often don't.

Dragon rips out at those shadowy deceits, with a vengeance!

Here's an example of some of his actions, and some of the coverage his personality has been given.

"The newspapers had given him a name, a fanciful one with a touch of sneer and pulp poetry. He wondered how the editors at the **Daily News** had ever let it get through. They called him Dragonflame, and they surely loved him. Hell, he gave them fantastically lurid headlines:

DRAGON TONGUES FLAME
AT CON ED PLOT
or
DRAGON VIGILANTE ASSAULTS
NUCLEAR REGULATORY
ASSOCIATION COVERUP
or
DRAGONFLAME ATTACKS
TIME SQUARE PROTECTION
RACKETS
or
POLICE SEEK IDENTITY OF RED
HOT DRAGON.

"Dragon has been a busy fellow."

This is a portrait of Dragon about to embark on a night raid.

"Night eyes.

"Shadow being.

"He stood in the shadows of the West Village, unseen.

"There was a bandana wrapped about his head. He had purchased it during his stay in Japan, of which he recalled more of the ideologies than of the landscapes, where the term "code of honor" was not something to be looked askance upon by $25-an-hour psychiatrists. He did not have any idea, at the time he purchased the hood, that there would be a time when he would wear it for a night raid such as the one he had planned. The mask was cutaway at his eyes, eyes which were accustomed to the dark, brooding eyes that seemed to embrace the night, to absorb it and hold it within. When he had tried it on, back in his loft on Bowery, the shining black material had reminded him of the headpiece Errol Flynn had worn in the movies when he played El Zorro, the Fox.

"He did not feel romantic or heroic.

"He felt tense. He controlled his breathing with great effort, drawing the chill November air into his lungs through his mouth with slow, deliberate effort.

"He was dressed in shadow colors. The Village ambiance seemed to reject his presence, almost in the same manner as it rejected the night. But there was also an acceptance, for the Village has yet to become either one thing or another, and one of the facets of the Village's personality welcomed him, approved of the sword which hung from his left hip.

"The katana, with its long, elegant, carefully-proportioned blade.

"The antique shops that had yet to become fashionable bridal shops offering tourist goods seemed to nod and understand the Ghurka throwing knives sheathed in wide leather straps that criss-crossed his chest, to understand, even if they did not approve. In the Village, there was no scorn expressed at the sight of his heavy black boots, or at sight of the yawara stick, the molded wooden weapon which fit so snugly within the hand when it was clenched.

"*Right on, man, that's the way to go. That's some hootin' gettup!*

In the major sequence from

Dragonflame And Other Bedtime Nightmares. Dragon breaks into a room wherein a Snuff film is being made. He had hoped that they intend to put the female star to rest in the final sequence.

Dragon needed respect.

'Count the pulse. Check the breathing. Draw the sword from scabbard.'

The sound woke the creature out covering his eyes with his right arm his right hand holding the sword an sharp edge of the blade outward. He had to land start. The long moments of confrontation were the most dangerous. The most unpredictable. He could not determine their initial reactions.

He raised his boot then smashed it into the windowpane. It gave easily and the sound of splintering glass was lost reaching his ears as he brought his arms up and threw his body hurtling through the barrier. Glass rained about him like transparent confetti.

He had misgauged the distance to the floor but it seemed softer than he had expected.

'Contact the police. Get the first out before they can comprehend what is happening.'

The glass broke and scraped under his boots as he shifted his weight. Both hands were on the sword hilt now and he kept the weapon tilted back over his shoulder. Ready for a quick drawer.

His eyes took them all in. Michaels was to the right near the salesperson, saying what the fuck in a unconvincing manner as if he couldn't respond properly to the information and was rejecting it at the same time. The two men were no more than four feet away. The girl was closer or more than three feet in front of him and she was staring at the pieces of another meat and organs running down her stomach and thighs. She was saying it for real. Jesus Mary and Joseph she said to the sound of broken glass and the sight of the threatening figure. Harold Miranda looked from Bernadette to the confusion scooting for the nightstand. Thinking perhaps that Sid had dropped the night meter and she intended a fitting to complete a fantasy that would stimulate him. Sid hammers did drop the right meter but the sound was cold, dulled after the slicing symphony of broken glass. He backed up against the wall, next to the yellow refrigerator. His eyes were panicked but staring at the angels. Street attitude. Know the entrances and exits.

Harold's hand was relaxed on the knife inside but Dragon knew he would have to keep an eye on it since it was the only visible weapon.

He pointed the katana toward Michaels bringing it down from over his head as Michaels started to move toward him. There was a slicing whistle as it the sword should be torn and it was a fast and pure sound like a wind that doesn't breathed into life by someone up. The tip of the long gently curving blade pointed toward Michaels face four inches from dissecting the left cheek nail and forehead precisely down the center.

Don move Dragon said and his voice was quiet but rigid. You can move away fast enough. You can't outrun this blade. You try anything any thing at all and I'll drop your left ear at your feet.

If the tabloids would love Dragonflame's exploits, the powers that run the comics would hate him.

Sid Chambers stood near the refrigerator and thought of going to bed. He pushed he going to leave his fucking brains out now about that. Build a new partition all over the wall paper.

Slowly almost arriving be- dude he knew he could do it exactly he raised the weapon out. It would only take a moment to get the gun from behind his back. He would pull out that .38 Colt Cobra and blow the lunatic away.

In Dragon's world as it often does in yours and mine nothing goes easy. You set out to accomplish one end and realize you never understood all the variables. And Dragon offers a form of catharsis. We have all had times when we have felt humiliated. We have all stood helpless before bureaucratic decrees that stripped us of our dignity. We have all had moments of confusion and indecision when it seems as hard understood anything happening around us. We have all had moments of helpless rage.

Dragon has experienced them all but he has the means and capabilities of striking back.

Both Dave and have had discussions about the fate of **Dragonflame and Other Bedtime Nightmares**. This is one of the first times that a writer who is known primarily for his comic book work has projected the serious fiction market in this manner. Will the readers and raves about the comics leave over to another medium? Or are many of them only followers of comics? How will they react to the adult themes of the moments of quiet the moments without the dark side Jack or even the sounds and smells of Dragon? Both Dave and are aware that a 0m of the readers of the **BLACK PANTHER** or **KILLRAVEN** will be enough to make this book a success. Us as a huge publishing con- glomerate which does at the profits of these two each single sale for a small individual group like this DOES make a difference. he giving comics fandom around have to band together en masse to affect any

you have to do. Write letters to the editors. Write letters to the publishers. Write letters to the distributors. Write letters to the retailers. Write letters to the fans. Write letters to the pros. Write letters to the critics. Write letters to the readers. Write letters to the writers. Write letters to the artists. Write letters to the editors. Write letters to the publishers. Write letters to the distributors. Write letters to the retailers. Write letters to the fans. Write letters to the pros. Write letters to the critics. Write letters to the readers. Write letters to the writers. Write letters to the artists.

Magazines like **Star Reach** our pride with F. [illegible] Enterprises, **Space Stranger** & **Chandler** and yes **Dragonflame** depend on the very support that the big companies can ignore. They can turn their backs at the reality and you name it-publishers from all the name.

Dragonflame And Other Bedtime Nightmares reflects the best because of it- is it was a project that gave the night terrors moments of stimulation nightmare wide wide weeks of inspiration.

But the book is here now. Ready. Waiting for your verdict waiting for your response.

Dragonflame

is never done anything like it before and you'll see another side of Paul Gulacy's art than you've ever seen before. It's what they call "your reader's Theatre of the Mind" [illegible] Spec- ial wherein at the end of the year you hope you can step facing guilts as many survival and starvation courses.

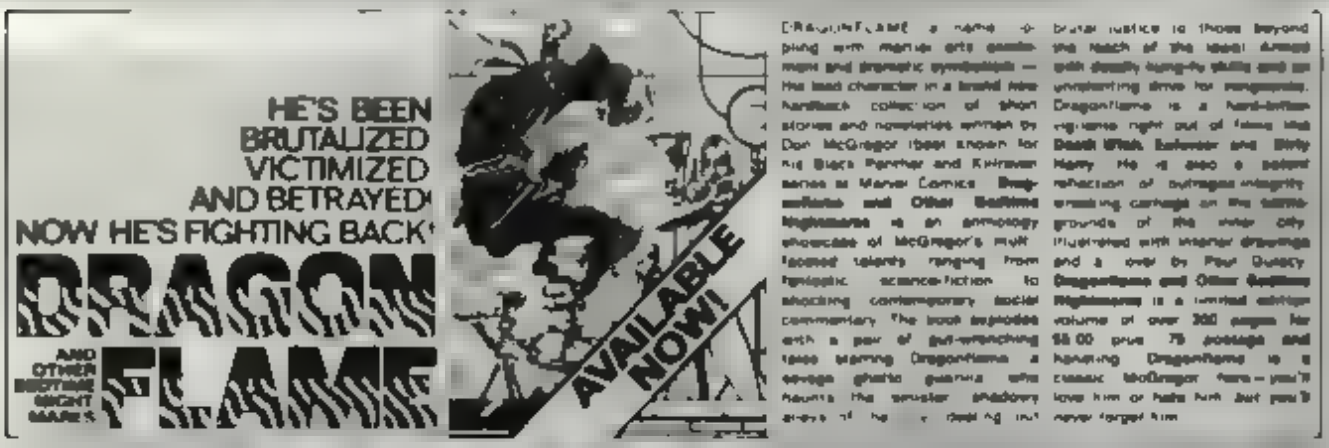
Be kind to each other. Be kind to yourselves.

Hang in there.

And remember his name is Dragonflame and he's been brutalized, victimized betrayed and alienated! But not anymore!

This one HE'S FIGHTING BACK.

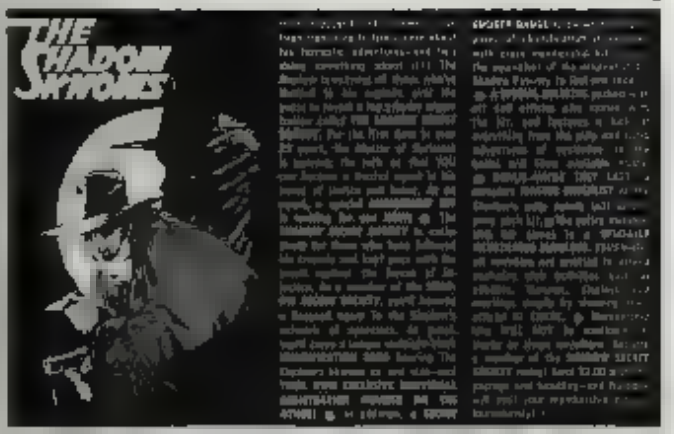
Don McGregor

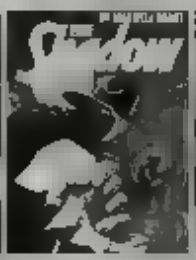


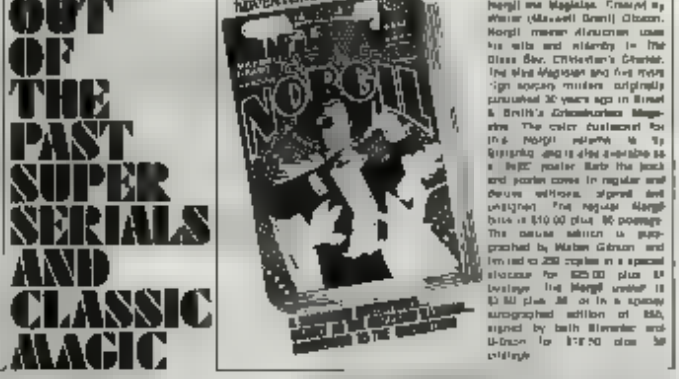
DRAGONFLAME a name to- ping with martial arts combi- nism and psychotic symbiosis — the lead character in a brand new hardback collection of short stories and novelettes written by Don McGregor best known for his Black Panther and Killraven series at Marvel Comics. **Drag- onflame and Other Bedtime Nightmares** is an anthology showcase of McGregor's multi- faceted talents ranging from fantastic science-fiction to shocking contemporary social commentary. The book explodes with a pair of gut-wrenching tales starring Dragonflame, a savage ghetto guerrilla who haunts the sinister shadowy abyss of the [illegible] dealing out brutal justice to those beyond the reach of the legal system with deadly kung-fu skills and an unrelenting drive for vengeance. Dragonflame is a hard-hitting vigilante right out of films like **Death Wish, Enforcer** and **Dirty Harry**. He is also a potent reflection of outrages inherent in the ever- increasing carnage on the battle- grounds of the inner city. Illustrated with intense drawings and a cover by Paul Gulacy, **Dragonflame and Other Bedtime Nightmares** is a limited edition volume of over 200 pages for $8.00 plus 75 postage and handling. Dragonflame is a classic McGregor hero — you'll love him or hate him but you'll never forget him.

Zelazny has also written a brand new 23-page tale for the book titled Jack of Shadows.

The Illustrated Roger Zelazny is a 128 page volume in a [illegible]







GREAT ADVENTURES FROM THOSE THRILLING DAYS OF YESTERYEAR

CAN YOU TAKE TWO YEARS OF FRAZETTA ??

Frazetta is back again, with a second full-color collection of rare and unpublished paintings in **The 1978 Frank Frazetta Calendar.** Here are 12 dynamic and dramatic paintings which did not appear in any of the *Frazetta* books, an unforgettable gallery of slave girls, barbarians, warriors and warlocks in ferocious battle. These are the paintings that originally graced Robert E. Howard, Edgar Rice Burroughs, Science Fiction Book Club, and sword and sorcery paperback covers and were later repainted by Frazetta to enhance their impact and beauty. As a bonus, there is also a poster-size centerspread of the new 8-page *Fire Demon* Altogether you get 13 beautiful and powerful paintings that will hang on your wall through the new year. The last Frazetta Calendar was a sell-out success so get your copy of the 1978 Frazetta Calendar today for only $4.95 plus .55 postage and handling.

The 1977 Frazetta Calendar is now out of print and has become an instant collector's item. We have bought out the remaining stock so that you can still get a copy before it's too late. **The 1977 Frazetta Calendar** features a breathtaking collection of a dozen unforgettable paintings—an incomparable gallery of demons, sorcerers, breathtaking beauties and thunderous battles, many of which first appeared on paperback covers for Robert E. Howard and Edgar Rice Burroughs novels. Virtually all have been altered by the artist since publication to create new and often startling effects, making them all the more intriguing. In addition, there is a double-sized poster centerspread featuring a powerful explosive and completely different version of **Conan the Buccaneer. The 1977 Frazetta Calendar** is a prime addition to any collection and is available for a limited time only at $7.50 plus .50 postage.

Collectors have demanded more — and we've got it!!! Here is the second big book of Frank Frazetta art — a completely NEW volume — packed with rare and long out-of-print paintings that range from fantasy, horror and science fiction to the savage, steel-thighed heroes of Robert E. Howard and Edgar Rice Burroughs. Volume Two matches the first Frazetta book in size and content, 9" x 11" with 80 pages printed on the highest quality enamel stock for $7.95 plus .55 postage. Volume One of **The Fantastic Art of Frank Frazetta** is also available, and it surpasses dozens of the artist's most spectacular works — CONAN, BRAK, JOHN CARTER and other immortal heroes created from the pages of the world's most explosive heroic adventure novels. Volume One is $6.95 plus .55 postage. Collecting examples of this art individually would cost over $100 per book, and is available here at a fraction of that cost. EVERY PAINTING is in sterling FULL-COLOR, and many have been restored and repainted by Frazetta since their original publication, making them entirely new works of art. Collectors will find **The Frazetta Treasury** an invaluable addition to their shelves. Beneath its full-color covers lies a wealth of excitement — in a volume which is really THREE BOOKS IN ONE! The first section delivers an incisive, revealing interview during which Frazetta discusses his painting techniques, his approach to fantasy art, his personal life and his professional aspirations. The second part runs a comprehensive checklist of Frazetta's published work, an impressive milestone that covers everything from comics and paperback covers to record jackets and movie posters. The third division contains a portfolio of Frazetta art, rare and previously unpublished drawings and paintings, including the legendary "undead" CONAN painting, published here in full color. As a special bonus, **The Frazetta Treasury** reprints an early western adventure story in addition to other full page examples of Frazetta comic art. The book contains over 80 illustrations and is printed on heavy vellum stock. Available now at $8.95 plus .50 postage and handling. Ariel is a fantasy magazine that takes you on an odyssey into the worlds of heroic fiction and the fantastic. Ariel 1 features a 16-page installment of Richard Corben's *Den* in full-color, followed by the first part of a revealing, informative interview with Frank Frazetta, liberally illustrated. Kagathi's Tarzan is analyzed in a retrospective treatise, with many illustrations. Essays on Batman and Conan are also included, along with features on the science fiction pulps, Corben's Bloodstar, and original fiction in 96 pages with full-color covers for $6.95 plus .55 postage. Ariel 2 features a Frank Frazetta cover painting and color throughout the entire book. The Frazetta interview is concluded, with page after page of fantasy artwork. There are also 14 more pages of Corben's *Den*, along with illustrated stories from Harlan Ellison, Ursula LeGuin, Ray Bradbury, Michael Moorcock and others. Major paintings and drawings by Frazetta, Jeff Jones, Corben and Bruce Jones illuminate this issue, which is printed on heavy, slick paper for top quality reproduction. $6.95 plus .55 postage.

FIVE FANTASTIC FRAZETTAS

HOUDINI

THE MAN FROM BEYOND

April, 1922—On the very brink of Niagara's thundering falls, a beautiful heroine is dramatically rescued from a watery doom by a 143-year old daredevil *just recently chipped out of a block of ice.*

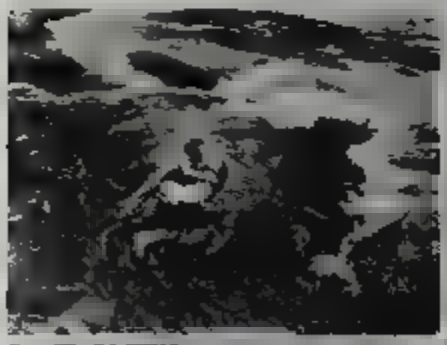
It was the premiere of **The Man From Beyond**, the success of which carved another notch in the career of its producer writer editor owner star and special effects director Harry Houdini. He had previously worked on **The Mysteries of Myra** and starred in **The Master Mystery**. The pressbook describes **Beyond** vividly:

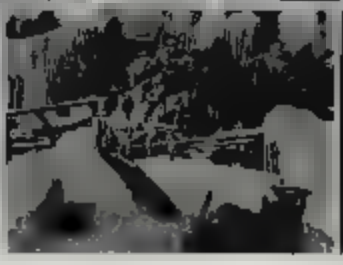
"Can a man be entrumped in a mass of ice for 100 years and be brought back to life? It is on the theory of life incarnate, and of the possibility of suspended animation, that Houdini has constructed a vehicle in which he makes his debut as star and producer.

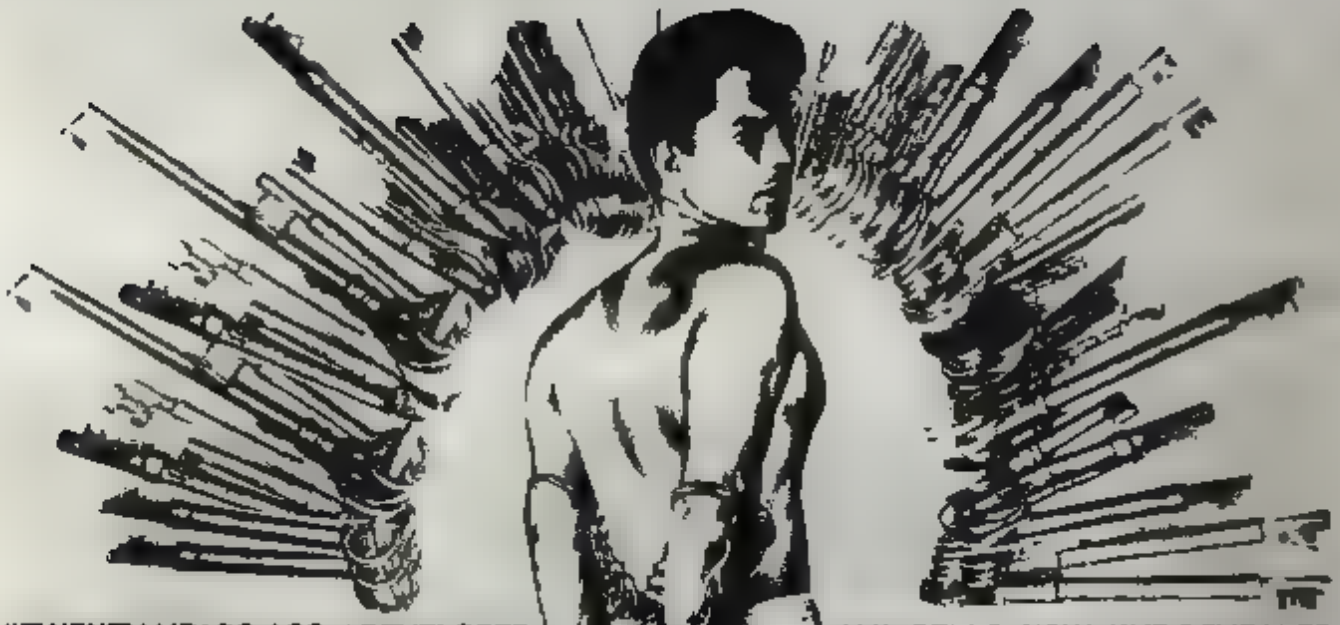
"In **The Man From Beyond**, two survivors of an Arctic expedition discover on board a derelict barkentine, the figure of a man, who, entombed in a casket of ice, has been living for a century in suspended animation. He proves to be Howard Hillary and is resuscitated by his rescuers. His first thought is of Felice, his sweetheart of a century before. Thus does the haunting romance begin. After Hillary attempts to claim as his own another Felice, and after a thrilling escape from a padded cell there is a thrilling spectacle of Houdini swimming through the rapids of Niagara Falls and bringing back from the very brink of the cataract the girl who was being borne to her death."

His next films were **The Grim Game**, **Terror Island** and **Haldane of the Secret Service**. Despite murderous monks and Chinese tortures, Haldane's expectations collapsed along with the Houdini Picture Corporation, leaving **Yar the Primeval Man** and **The Mystery of the Sound** (both original Houdini stories) unproduced. The Master of Escapes left the toiling beauties of movieland to pursue spirits and mysteries of the world beyond leaving behind only a handful of ghostly images on film.

The photos and illustrations presented here are from the original pressbook to **The Man From Beyond**, an extremely rare item even among the most dedicated collectors of magic memorabilia. Packed with information, biographies, synopses and photos, the pressbook is so rare that SUPERGRAPHICS is reproducing it in a high-quality facsimile edition, 11 x 15 inches in size and 20 pages, limited to 100 copies, for $10 plus 75 postage. Much of the material contained in this **Houdini Pressbook** has been sought by magic buffs and biographers for decades. It's a mystifying oddity that bridges the gap between movies and the magic of the world's greatest escape artist. **The Man From Beyond** pressbook will disappear fast—right before your very eyes. ●







"TWENTY YEARS AGO, I DEVELOPED A SERIES OF SECRET THEORIES AND TECHNIQUES THAT ENABLED ME TO RELEASE MYSELF FROM ANY FORM OF RESTRAINT, FROM HANDCUFFS TO STRAITJACKETS TO JAIL CELLS NOW, I'VE REVEALED THOSE SECRETS IN A SPECIAL BOOK WHICH I BELIEVE YOU WILL FIND TO BE FASCINATING AND FANTASTIC BECAUSE IT'S REAL! I CALL IT **IRON PUZZLES.**"

IRON PUZZLES, written by STERANKO is the most original and comprehensive book on the subject of escape magic ever published. Here in a special collector's edition, the author reveals page after page of TOOLS TRICKS AND TECHNIQUES a profusion of photos, drawings and schematics including Locksmithing Devices, The Universal Pick (6 tools in The "Y" Pick Hall "T" Special Barrel Key Device; The Pocket Knife Pick; Adjustable Double "Y" Pick Universal Handles; Picking Guns, One-hand Pin Tumbler Picks and Advanced Version The Sneaker; The Separator; Inversion Disc with Drill Positions, Handcuff Chart, Opening Padlocks by Picking, Rapping, Drilling, Shimming, Twisting; Combination Locks and Safes, The Vault Escape, Safecracking Tools, Pulling, Peeling, Cutting, Burning, Blowing, etc. Electronic Stethoscope, Safe-opening Micrometer, Jump Cuffs, Rope Ties and Escapes; Chains and Straightjacket Techniques; Upside-down support devices, Gaffed Jackets, the Spiked Ring and other devices, Prison Escapes, The Dual Challenge, Master Methods and Solutions, Secret Picks and Tool Concealment; Hazards of Jail-breaking, Escape Variations and Implements, The Complete Dynamic Magic Act, Death-defying Railroad Escape, Challenge Packing Box—Underwater; Sensational High Dive, Buried Alive, The Hanged Man; Parachute Jump, Tomb of Ice, The Electric Chair, The Incandescent Man, The New Fourth Dimension Act, Building an Act; The Vital Secrets, The Master System of Publicity Stunts, Press Releases, Feature Stories and Promotional Kits; Selling the Act, Posters, Handcuff King Breakers, Lexicon of Locks and Devices, and dozens of others. **IRON PUZZLES** is packed with autobiographical material about STERANKO that you never knew before, his most dangerous stunts, his toughest escapes. The volume comes in a specially designed *Portfolio Case*—and every book will be signed by STERANKO personally. **IRON PUZZLES** will print an edition of 10,000 copies. $12.50 plus $1.00 postage and handling.

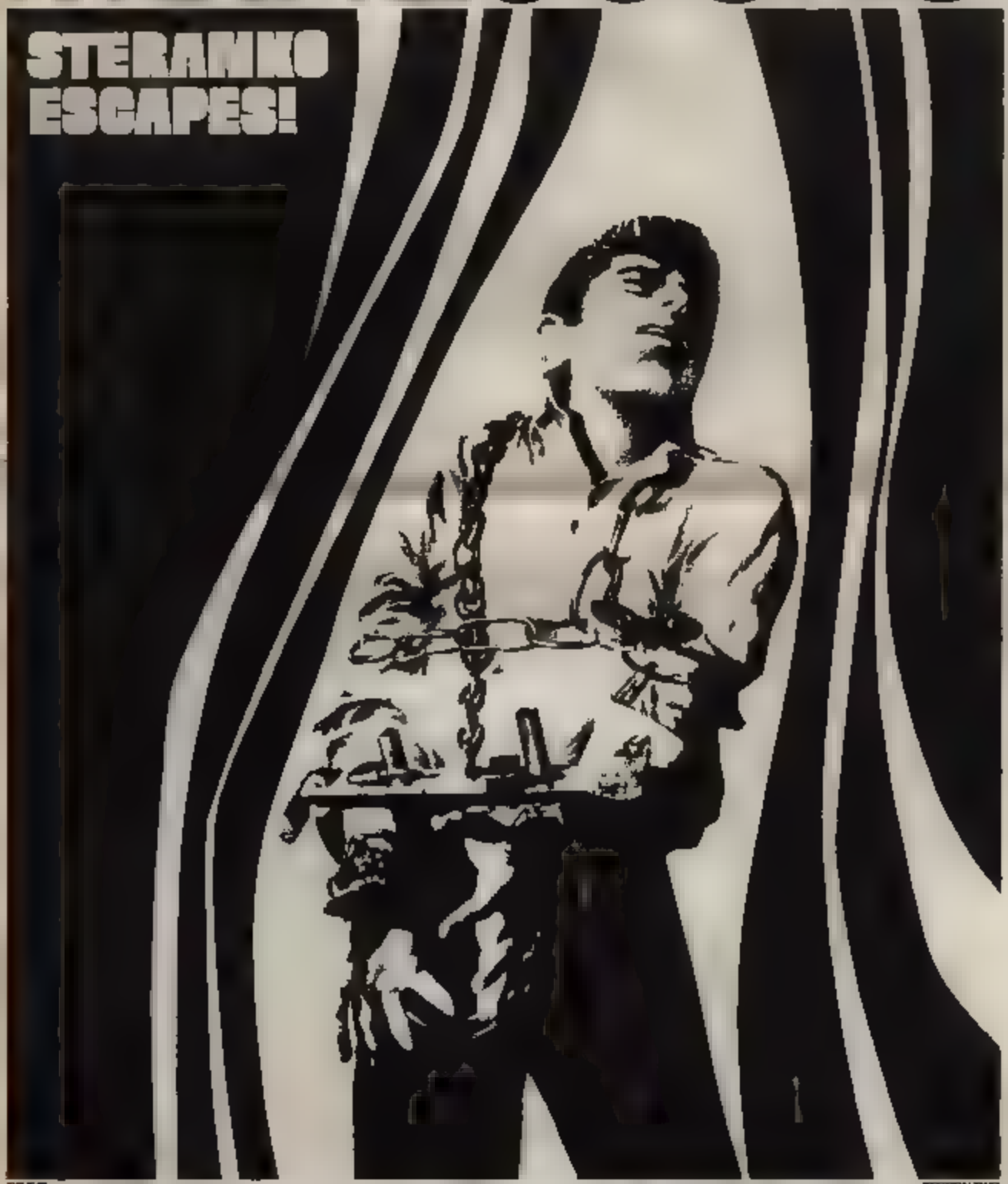
IRON PUZZLES

AVAILABLE IN FEBRUARY

AMERICA'S NEW MAGAZINE OF POPULAR ENTERTAINMENT

mediascene

STERANKO ESCAPES!



ISSUE 27

SECTION TWO

BREA

I challenge anyone to lock me in a handcuff from which I cannot escape! :STERANKO

Stone walls do not a prison make, nor iron bars a cage.

Those words, penned by Richard Lovelace well over a century ago, could easily apply to a small group of men who have the remarkable power to escape from any restraint, to free themselves from confinement of every kind.

I am one of those men.

Back in the 50's, when much of my effort and energy was directed toward performing as an entertainer, I developed an act based on the mystery of escapes. During the two years that I appeared publicly, I was suspended upside down by my heels in straightjackets, locked into handcuffs and leg-irons by detectives, police, sheriff's and state police, tied with rope, chains, fishline, belts, electrical cable, wire and even copper tubing, sealed into U. S. Government mail bags stuffed into steel cabinets, safes, barrels, vaults, refrigerators and heavy wooden packing crates; padlocked into metal tanks that were dropped into river bottoms, bound into pillories, stocks, cages, leather yokes and cages, entombed in jails and prison cells rolled into hurricane fencing, welded into a trailer, shut up in a meat locker, confined in automobile trunks; buried under the ground, and bound to a moving ferris wheel.

In each case, I escaped—generally in less time than it required to imprison me.

The secret? Depending on how you look at it, there could be one or a thousand and one. But let's start at the beginning.

The very first memory of anything magic is of my father, who performed occasional stage shows. I still recall a vanishing vase effect he presented in the family living room when I was four or five years old. He taught me my first tricks, contracted TB the following year and spent the next four recovering in a sanitarium. It was the war years and the going was tough. We lived on relief. Clothes were all hand-me-downs. We were cold, poor and hungry, poor.

During those years, my secret and most fascinating companion was my father's old Doc Tarbell 80-lesson Mail Order Magic Course. It was the Arabian Nights, Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea and From the Earth to the Moon all in a single marvelous package—the secrets of the ages, from Merlin to Cagliostro to Blackstone—a Pandora's box that waited to be explored in awe, in wonder and, most of all, in secret. I must be discovered and find myself unable to sit down for a week.

It became my Bible and I read it through over and over again—from parlor tricks to stage illusions, from mental effects to escape magic. By the age of nine, I was performing simple one-handed cuts with a pack of cards and a creditable back and front palm, a maneuver which allows manipulators to show their hands empty while concealing one or more cards.

My skill developed proportionately with my acquisition of knowledge, and by the time I entered my mid-teens, the groundwork had been laid for what was to follow. During this time, I began reading about the life of Houdini, what little was available, and became interested in the intricacies of locks and keys in a letter written to a novice escape artist some fifteen years ago, stated, 'ON LOCKS

My career as an escape artist [illegible] take off. All I had to do was escape from jail.

AND LOCKSMITHING: I began with very simple locks (like warded locks), opening them up and studying their working mechanisms. Eventually, I knew the necessary turn to open them and as I encountered them later, brought this knowledge into play. Try this and you'll find that your mind's eye will seem to penetrate a lock's metal casing like Superman's x-ray vision and enable you to open it as though you were *looking inside it.*"

Learning the art of lock-smithing at fifteen can be a very delicate, if not impossible chore. All my supplications to the local man fell on deaf ears. They had more secrets than the Atomic Energy Commission and were tighter knit than the Klu Klux Klan. An outsider was an outsider. The situation called for drastic measures, a wild idea.

And I had the idea.

I knew the only way to gain their confidence and win them over to my side was to operate on their turf, their game with their rules: something startling, radical, outrageous, something they said would be impossible!

The biggest lock shop in the city was owned by the most ill-tempered, thin-skinned and cantankerous locksmith in the world. He was always my choice for the impending breakthrough. If it worked for me here, everything else would be a pushover.

Saturday afternoon. He glanced up at me as I entered the shop and kept working amidst the sparks of grinding metal. He knew a customer when he saw one, but I hung around anyway. He was a tall man, thin, gaunt, spidery-looking with a pair of glasses that enlarged his bug eyes to twice size. The grinding wheel stopped. It was my cue.

"Ever hear of a combination lock with more than one combination?"

He gave me a mean get-the-hell outta-here-kid look.

"Give me any combination lock in the shop and I'll give you two different combinations for it."

That stopped him, made him take a minute to decide whether to bounce me out on the concrete or make a fool out of myself. I got lucky. He went for the latter and tossed me an expensive combination padlock. A minute later, I showed him the two combinations, and started a friendship that lasted for years.

Another ally was my good friend, Bob Paolini, a mechanical genius who became a partner in many of the adventures that were to follow. Both of us were avid students, determined to unravel the secrets of every lock we could lay our hand on. It was a matter of time and midnight oil. Locks don't want to give up their secrets easily.

They did anyway.

This was the point when I decided to combine my amateur magic act with my knowledge of locks and escapes—and to my surprise, no one was the slightest bit interested. Who wanted to watch a kid get out of a pair of handcuffs or a half mile of clothesline when they could have a couple of hip dancers instead? A half year went by before I began to get the message.

Then as the end of the world approached, I remembered the old Tarbell Course and the publicity angle. Hell, if it was good enough for Houdini, it was good enough for me.

It was a cold February Thursday just after school, when I pushed my way through the doors of City Hall and made my way to the Chief of Detectives office. It was right out of a Warner Bros. thriller with peeling paint, an ancient wooden desk and even a rotary black fan perched atop a battery of filing

KING OUT!

cabinets. I decided to use a modest approach and told them I would escape from any handcuff key from or jail cell in which they could imprison me.

Captain John Fellner, the chief of Detectives replied that no one has ever escaped from a lock-up but being a good sport he would be very pleased to give an optimistic young magician his big chance and ordered a heavy pair of cuffs on me. I begged off and told them to be back the next day and in those hands all around. Not that we didn't have attempted it right here and there but the most important part of the plan had yet to be set in motion. I headed straight for the local newspaper offices and told the editor I was planning to break out of jail at 1 o'clock the following day.

It was all set. The resulting publicity should make my act in demand. I reasoned. My career as an escape artist was about to take off. All I had to do was escape from jail.

"I was a bit worried," Captain Fellner said the next day. He was flanked by a news reporter and a photographer who was bristling with light meters, cameras and cases slung around his neck. It was a few minutes after four by four thirty. I was in the cell block locked by a host of detectives, off duty police men, the mayor, one reporter and one photographer. Flashbulbs popped as I was handcuffed spread-eagled to the iron bars of a cell with four pairs of the sheriff's shackles and foot irons being searched. Then I was told to be left alone.

I had gone over the procedure a thousand times in my mind. It was foolproof. Perhaps I should have practiced the stunt for real, except I never had the money to buy four pairs of handcuffs. Too late to think about it now. This was the real thing. Play time was over.

A newspaper account told what followed. Eight minutes passed before the spectators waiting outside the closed door became worried and called out "Are you all right?" I'm still here," was the reply.

At the 14-minute mark, as the inquiry was made, and Houdini again said he was all right. He asked how long he'd been locked up. Three minutes," the mayor asked. How long does this trick usually take you?" "I don't know," came the reply, "as I've never tried it before."

At the 20-minute mark Mayor James Barkley expressed doubts that it could be done and left. At the 25-minute mark, the detectives became concerned and said they would give the escape artist just five more minutes.

The end came three minutes later. Perspiring and somewhat bedraggled Houdini walked through the door—completely free of the four handcuffs.

To say the spectators were astounded would be an understatement.

The following day the papers ran three photos and a half-page write-up on the escape—and I had a fifteen-minute radio interview. Bookings came in like apple blossoms in a spring orchard.

For the next two years I performed the same basic escape act which I called Dynamic Magic at clubs, stage shows, banquets, TV spots and carnivals. The routine ran from 20 to 30 minutes and was delivered with a burst of machine-gun pace.

After an introduction, I would explain the intricacies of escape techniques to the audience. I have the extraordinary ability to release myself from any form of confinement. No lock can resist me. If were a criminal, no jail could hold me. Tonight I will prove that no handcuff on the face of the earth can hold me. If you doubt it, invite you to step up on the stage and witness the following proceedings at close range.

I began with some fast patter about "see how and what tying demonstrating with a series of rapid yes and false knots. For openers, my hands were tied behind my back by the committee and would then myself in an instant placing a free hand on a spectator's shoulder shaking his hands, then turn around showing them relied on almost the same second. The follow-up was a clothesline is with 60 feet of rope. Escape time: two minutes.

A handcuff routine came next opening with a series of difficult contortions in the first I had a pair of cuffs placed on my wrists from behind explaining that all it took to bring them front was a step through the arms. A second face-breaking method was to manoeuver them over the head, a feat I performed several years later in a slightly different version with the Mighty Hannum carnival shows and have never been duplicated by any performer. I kept in shape at that time by working out on the flying rings and parallel bars besides lifting weights three days a week. For the next eight (picked up from my previous carnival experience), I'd work my way through a small opening in a three foot square of newspaper. The opening was exactly 7 x 10 inches—that a piece of typing paper or hair big enough for a large cat to get through. In the original camera shot, went through a tennis racquet head—but the space was slightly smaller. My chest measurement at the time was 38 and that was the whole point: agility counts.

Locks came next. Who ever thought of locking a door? For that matter who ever thought of a door? In the next three minutes I delivered a capsule history of locks, the oldest lock known made in Assyria over FOUR THOUSAND YEARS AGO operates on exactly the same principle as our modern pin tumbler locks, while openly picking a half-dozen locks with a variety of tools and opening several pad-handed.

Challengers appeared with rusted cuffs. The $1000 remained in my possession.

At this point I challenged the audience with an offer of $1,000 to anyone who could lock me up in a handcuff from which I could not escape. Challengers appeared at somewhere less than half of my performances. Too often with rusted cuffs and keys broken off in the locks. The $1,000 remained in my possession.

Asking for a volunteer from the committee on stage, I'd produce a pair of handcuffs, lock them in and after they replaced the miracles was genuine, gave them the key. The cuffs still could not be opened because with the cuffs on the keyhole was inaccessible. The volunteer usually dropped the key to the floor upon which would release him and he'd lift it was pressed to place them on me. The committee would then lock on more pairs of cuffs on my wrists and would occasionally seal the keyholes with tape.

The result was an impressive pile of shackles. My only request was that my jacket be thrown over my hands. The instant they were covered the first pair of cuffs dropped to the floor. At intervals of about ten seconds, the remaining cuffs followed—still sealed and locked. At times I'd remove the final pair as I was getting motion cover the method. Frequently applause started with the first pair and continued to the last.

There was always only one trouble. The straightjacket I'd brought from the Pennsylvania State Mental Hospital, a fact I was careful to point out during every performance, had ten or three men step into the jacket explaining to the audience that this very device was once used to confine the murderously insane, dismissed the committee stood alone in the spotlight. Slowly, almost painfully, began to writhe inside the jacket. As the straightjacket built so did the action. The straightjacket escape was one after that could really be said to be audacious. I continued the build-up for two or three minutes, finally climaxing the act by tearing off the jacket in a remarkable burst of exhilaration.

After slipping on my coat, I thanked the audience, sincerely and pointed that their happiness was no illusion.

Though the act was probably entertaining enough to sustain itself, it was kept alive with a barrage of publicity from as many angles as I could come up with. TV, radio, newspapers and public appearances kept a record of my progress during that first year. 1954 and made some of the following entries:

FEB 7. Riverside Inn County Club challenged to escape from a huge Yale & Towne safe-in vault in the club's basement. Escaped with the aid of a pack of matches, a pencil and clean from my shoe 7 minutes.

MAR 3. Returned to the City Hall cellblock with a challenge to escape from one of the cells with the condition that if I fail must remain in the lock up for 24-hours. They used Number 3 on the lock (sound?) be reached from the inside. Thorough search by two working policemen determined to make sure couldn't do it again. Chief of Police supervises 3 minutes.

MAR 6. Interviewed on TV. Straightjacket escape 53 seconds.

APR 19. Manacled by Sheriff Edward Kirk in County Court House 30 seconds.

Tied with 20 feet of sash cord and escaped before 40 witnesses 90 seconds.

MAY 7. Interviewed by Associated Press.

MAY 15—Bridge jump, 60 feet

help their after being locked into three pairs of handcuffs two pairs of leglocks 153 seconds

MAY 3 Handcuffed by County Detectives with four pairs of cuffs 2½ minutes

JUL 4 Handcuffed by State Police difficult position 2 minutes

JUL 19— Locked into small metal trunk, tied with ropes locks sealed with wax dropped into river from pier 3 minutes 22 seconds

JUL 31 Buried alive at Public Municipal Stadium in four feet grave without air for 5 minutes 1800 people attended

AUG 7 Challenges escape from U S Government mail bag during Lowdnight Amusement Park Show Toughest escape ever 7 minutes

My philosophy was simple What one man could do another man could accept That ideology and some great measure of pain allowed me to perform over a hundred eight-minute challenges and successfully escape from every one without a single failure

Yet there were moments when I thought it was all over especially after being stuffed into a steel barrel upside down in chains for an hour and a half Nevertheless I was able to free myself from every restraint device ever encountered in handcuffs, I don't believe that the stunts that looked easy were generally the toughest and the ones that seemed difficult were the simplest

After each night's show I would begin my preparations for the next day's performance I would rest in the afternoon and then begin to get ready for the show that night I would eat a light meal and then start to get into my costume and make-up I would then begin to prepare myself mentally for the challenge that I was about to perform

Before each performance I would always pray to God that I would be able to perform the stunt safely and successfully I would also pray that no one in the audience would be injured during the performance of the stunt

Then I would walk out to the stage and perform the escape

Each escape was different and each had its own peculiar danger Sometimes I would be hanging upside down from the ceiling of a theatre by my ankles in a straitjacket Sometimes I would be suspended in the air in a straitjacket with my hands cuffed behind my back Sometimes I would be locked in a box and thrown into the river Sometimes I would be buried alive

Each escape was dangerous and each had to be performed perfectly or I would be seriously injured or killed

Before I would perform any escape I would always rehearse it many times I would rehearse it in my mind I would rehearse it in my dressing room I would rehearse it backstage I would rehearse it on the stage

I would rehearse it over and over again until I knew that I could perform it perfectly

Rehearsing was very important to me because I knew that I could not afford to make any mistakes when I performed the escape in front of the audience

Rehearsing was also very important to me because it helped me to overcome my fear of performing the escape in front of the audience

I also did my own stunts during the stage show a half hour later And would you believe they asked me to do the same stunt again the next day

After two years of seeing the world upside down hanging by a rope in a straitjacket or standing stripped naked in a box tightened by a hundred pounds of iron the passion for escapes began to fade As a form of entertainment it had become very tiresome Creatively and financially Media people had become so bored with my work that only the most killing stunts would get coverage In a phrase if had all been done it was over

My interests turned to other areas music became one of the most important Magic continued to play a part in my life I like the magic of cards and coins I started over again I like the beginning developing a series of sleights and routines on my own which culminated in a number of awards the publication of several books and a reputation that is still regarded with respect by magicians around the world

In 1964 I wrote a book about my escape techniques covering every trick of the art TOOLS TRICKS AND TECHNIQUES OF HOUDINI THE PROBLEMS OF RIGGS HANDS AND STRAIGHT JACKETS HOW TO BE A JAIL-BREAKER THE COMPLETE DYNAMIC MAGIC ACT

After a sixteen foot drop, I crashed into a seat that had shuttled into position almost beneath me.

It all happened in a split second quick to think In the split second that my body began to fall instinctively trying to right myself Fear took over as in a gymnastic diving dismount There was no nearby beam or cable only empty air and the fall continued though I was still strapped in a few ropes like a net of spiderwebs After a sixteen foot drop I crashed into a seat that had just shuttled into position almost beneath me

I sprained both ankles fractured several inches of skin off my shin bones took a cut under the left eyebrow and a bruise on my knee

Something happened after the third revolution The rope suddenly began to unravel I had loosened it too much and the slack no longer supported my weight From an upside-down position I fell backwards into a maze of confusing lights The crowd shrieked below

I realized that I was in serious trouble I had to act quickly to think In the split second that my body began to fall instinctively trying to right myself Fear took over as in a gymnastic diving dismount There was no nearby beam or cable only empty air and the fall continued though it was still slowed in a few ropes like a net of spiderwebs After a sixteen foot drop I crashed into a seat that had just shuttled into position almost beneath me

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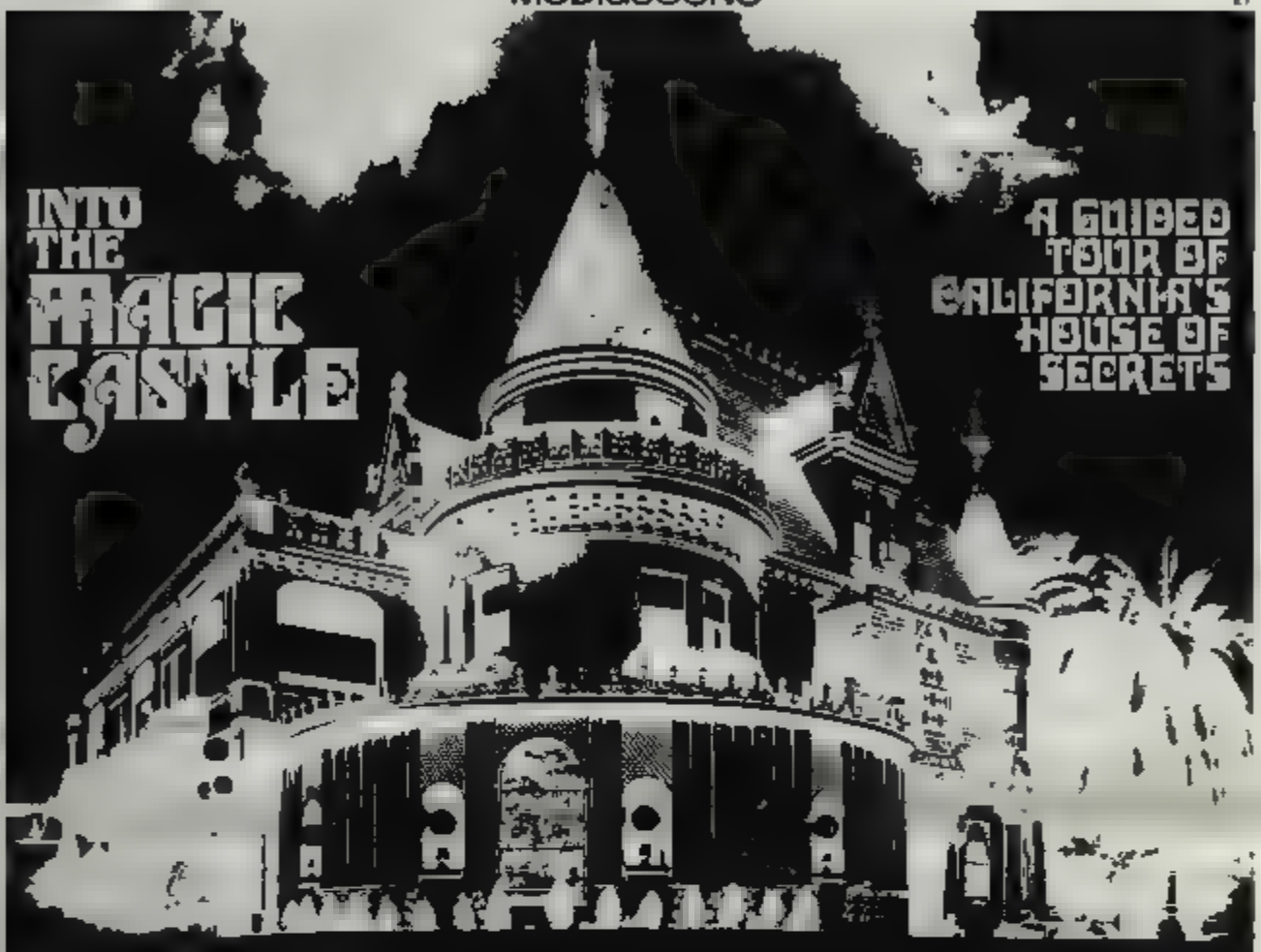

INTO THE MAGIC CASTLE

A GUIDED TOUR OF CALIFORNIA'S HOUSE OF SECRETS

It's a stormy night, but you've decided to brave it anyhow.

You're heading south along Hollywood Boulevard, then you take a sharp right and climb the hill for another block to Franklin. You drive through the huge iron gates, past the sign that reads "MAGIC CASTLE," and total upward along the steep incline. Suddenly it looms ahead of you, right out of a Robert Bloch novel, bristling with towers and turrets and baroque embellishments.

Before you know it, an attendant has taken your car, leaving you standing at the building's entrance. Inside, a pleasant and pretty lady greets you and asks you to sign the guest book. Then you have to enter and discover the only door in the breezeway to the one you entered. What was those magic words that All Baba spoke? After all, this is a place where nothing is ever what it seems to be, where the real and the unreal meet. What have you got to lose? You say it.

"Open Sesame!"

You list a little foolish until a wall of darkness rolls aside, bidding you to enter the world of magic and mystery. You make your way through the crowd, a dizzying of the ornate architecture (original) [illegible] panelling and staircases, stained glass windows and abundant statuary. The atmosphere has already begun: the sounds and hints are alive with vintage magic posters and curiosities, paraphernalia. You're about to share the evening with illusionists, Houdini, Blaine, Thurston and a host of other spiritual luminaries.

Order a drink at the Hippodrome bar and begin your own magical mystery tour. Just around the corner is an elegant Victorian parlour lushly furnished with period pieces and period bric-a-brac. The restored piano player at the baby grand is taking requests from the crowd. No, it's not the dialin' jukes just happens to be another of the evening's many surprises as the bird chattering in the cage over the piano. Play it again, Irma.

Posters, playbills and books of the world's greatest illusionists regale the eye, and set the stage for what's yet to come. But first, dinner, a full course gourmet delight served by the steward and his staff (white gloves, of course). The setting is elegant, fine silver and crystal stemware, and the view overlooks the neon streets of Hollywood...just across the street Frank Sacco assigned the tales of the most wonderful magician of them all, the Wizard of Oz.

After the food, wines and coffees, the viewing explores why a fifteenth chair has been left unoccupied; it is reserved for a "medium" who will recreate the famous Final Houdini Seance held in 1936. The following entertainment brings you face to face with that Blanche Healey, but it's all in the spirit of fun.

Suddenly it looms ahead of you, right out of a Robert Bloch novel, bristling with towers and turrets and baroque embellishments.

The medium aptly points out that Houdini scorns both voice mightily, "for entertainment purposes only!"

As you wind your way through the various halls, you can't help but marvel at the Hierschfeld Museum, a permanent collection of fine, old machines and automatic devices designed a century ago for entertainment purposes. Put a penny in the slot and see what happens.

The Parlour of Prestidigitation is a new addition to the Magic Castle, a theatre that seats just over 50 while still maintaining the intimacy required for "close-up" work with cards and coins and other small equipment. On a larger scale, the Palace of Mystery presents spectacular magical shows nightly with many of the most famous magical entertainers working today.

While you're passing over that final thrilling or mind-numbing about the 1000 lightning-struck wood pieces, you step up to the Palace Bar, newly imported from England, with its extraordinary hooded sconces and marvelous Oliver and Boyd carpet. Wait a minute, would that be—it is! Some of Hollywood's most famous celebrities are members of the Magic Castle and are invited to step up at any moment in the near right next to yours.

The magicians and their audiences get a chance to rub (and teach) elbows in the Mug and Hare Pub located in the cellar of the Magic Castle. Here is where the hearty artillery really begins, as the close-up workers toil to perform their latest miracles for themselves and their peers—and it happens right under your very nose (as the line goes, "If you have a very keen").

The Magic Castle is the clubhouse of the Academy of Magical Arts, a non-profit social organization founded in 1963 by the late William Larsen, Sr. His two sons, Bill and Milt, are responsible for the creation, maintenance and continued improvement of the huge vintage mansion and its growth over the years. Both men are magicians themselves and come from a magical family. In addition to being involved in the television industry.

Membership is split into two classifications: regular members must be amateur or professional magicians who are accepted into the club by a board of governors. Associate memberships are available to magic enthusiasts and must be sponsored by two regular members.

The Magic Castle functions as a gathering place for performers and entertainers from every corner of the globe. Any night spent within its Waldorf-Gothic confines is bound to be memorable. If not hospitable. Just outside, the great stone lion knocker does beseech to guests as they disappear through the iron grillwork and old Venice lamp-posts and into the Castle proper. ●

Barbarians!
Demon armies!
Exotic slave girls and beautiful princesses!
The dangers and delights of a thousand and one nights!

All these and more are the elements which make up the genre that has become known as Sword and Sorcery. As its popularity within the framework of commercial entertainment media grows, so too does the chance for new film adaptations using this subject matter.

With the possible exception of Ray Harryhausen's adventure fantasies, the Sword and Sorcery epics of the past have emphasised too much Sword, too little Sorcery.

CONAN THONGOR & SAGAN

This situation may soon be rectified when no less than three productions, which are either being readied for filming or have already been completed, make their way to the local theatres. These projects are: Ed Pressman's Conan, Milton Subotsky's Thongor in the Valley of the Demons and an independently produced film going under the working title of Sagan.

Each film is apparently bristling with sword and sorcery action. Milton Subotsky, with his Sword and Sorcery, Ltd. production company located in England, is intimately involved with the Thongor project. The preliminary phases for the production are complete. The script and a number of fantastic production paintings are enough to inspire Subotsky and his staff to bring the famous Lin Carter character to life. According to Subotsky, if the film can match the pre-production paintings that I've got, we might have another Star Wars on our hands." The production is almost to the point of negotiating for cast and crew. In any event, Subotsky, who had tried unsuccessfully to produce a Conan feature several years ago, feels confident that Thongor will become a reality in the near future.

Conan is, in a sense, both further than becoming a reality and closer to an actual production date than Subotsky's project. Ed Pressman's association with Roy Thomas in generating a script for the Conan feature has been noted in the past. It is also known that writer/director John Milius has shown interest in working on the film and Arnold Pumping Iron Schwarzenegger is being considered for the title role. Jerry Conan Milius is currently directing Big Wednesday, a film which uses the element of surfing as a major metaphor to dramatise the changing cultural attitudes facing Americans in the 1960s. If he does participate in Pressman's Conan project it will have to wait until he completes his current undertaking.

Arnold, on the other hand, has been quoted to storewhile himself for a five picture contract to star as Conan. In a move which might seem reminiscent of the one made by Steve Reeves twenty years ago with the Sword and Sandal cycle of Hercules' films, Arnold's intended Conan arrangement is an interesting speculation on the faith that certain producers have for the viability of this form of genre storytelling.

The film that is furthest along in terms of actual production values is Kurt Wiesner's Sagan. The principle photography is silent. All that remains is to cut in the opening titles and Sagan will be ready for theatrical release.

Described as a science fiction film set on an earth of a distant future, Sagan manages to blend the conventions of the sf genre with bloody sword and sorcery exploits. Sagan's world is barren, a result of a major holocaust which has destroyed civilisation and technology. All that remains are a handful of survivors who took to evil as a means of rising from their despair. Few remember the triumphs of the technological age that propagated this angry barbarian wilderness. Those that do have tried to channel what little sophisticated weapons, like rockets, to create the militants and the weak.

The hero, Sagan, is an avenger, whose grasp with to seek out and defeat the incarnation of evil in his primitive post-holocaust society. He is highly skilled in a brand of self-defense which resembles the Oriental martial arts. His weapons include a Samurai-sword and various implements akin to ninja fighting. Sagan is the eternal wanderer. His quest is to find evil and destroy it. It is this goal which guides him and gives him strength.

The plot of the film is plain and to the point. The Evil One, known as Jonas, is aware of Sagan's existence and sends a host of assassins to intercept

THE RETURN OF THE SWORD AND SORCERY FILM

threat in a routine and functional manner. Along the way he is befriended by a group of beautiful women that he rescues. The end result of this encounter leads Sagan into the clutches of the arch villain of the film, a sinister, mystical figure known as Brogan.

After confronting a number of Brogan's hirelings, Sagan eventually enters Jones to deal with his nemesis at a sacrificial offering. The barbarian evades his captors and interrupts the human sacrifice to the all-powerful Jones. Fighting his way to the Altar of Jones, Sagan instigates a revolution of sorts in which the militants and disciples of the Evil One engage in epic mortal combat. On reaching the altar, Sagan challenges Brogan to a showdown. It is here that the magical quality of the film comes to life allowing Sagan to turn into a true opponent of the Sword and Sorcery genre.

Neither confident nor successfully outwits his opponent. Sagan's repeated blows to Brogan's body merely refresh and strengthen the dark priest. Brogan, on the other hand, is relatively ineffective with his sword. It is the lack of skill which finally forces Brogan to reach into the sky and draw down lightning bolts to hurl at Sagan. The battle becomes one of flesh, metaphysical conflict. Eventually Sagan utilizes discarded lightning bolts he put on and to his supernatural foils.

This does not, however, end the contest for Sagan. He realizes that Jones' plans to destroy him hinge on the ancient

[redacted]

PHOTOS: The photos on these two pages are from Kiet Wagner's epic production of Sagan, a futuristic sword & sorcery spectacle. Sagan is portrayed by Mr. Universe titleholder Frank Zane, who's impressive musculature makes him a natural in the part. The imagery and blatant posturing are also liberally displayed in these scenes, along with the prerequisite number of beautiful maidens in distress. The large-armored warrior caught unsheathing his saber is Brenos, a trustworthy and powerful member of The Unholy Ten, hand-picked [illegible] the Evil Ones.

racial technologies of the pre-historical era. He discovers a passage leading from the temple to a control room where two scientists are about to detonate a nuclear device. Sagan destroys the intermediate and carries back to his lovely companion. After a brief reunion, Sagan moves on to continue his quest against mystic evil and magical demons.

Coming from a heritage which includes the Steve Reeves-type movie and the martial arts extravaganzas of Bruce Lee, Sagan manages to blend the concepts of sword and sorcery into a palatable pulp spectacle. The film stars Frank Zane, a professional bodybuilder and

accredited instructor to Nautilus of guidance and exercise, who recently won the title of Mr. Universe. An outspoken personality and an extremely entertain-

The sword of the past have emphasized too much sword and too little sorcery.

ing individual, Zane manages to bring a spark of life to the character of Sagan. For Frank, Sagan is his first starring role. The producers of the film are apparently pleased with the results and are now planning a sequel to the first Sagan movie.

Others in the cast include Roger Callard and Steve Davis, both physical culture enthusiasts. Callard, a former Mr. America, has recently completed a role in Mae West's new movie Sextette. To round out the proceedings, Sagan features the beauty of Dyti Eldridge, Sue Swain and Belinda La Rosa.

The film is a youthful production centered in southern California. Director Albert Pyun has been the guiding force on Sagan, having served as an assistant to the great director Akira Kurosawa for several years. Albert has combined his fascination of the Sword and Sorcery genre [illegible] the pre-historic [illegible] samurai film. He has been a constant source of inspiration for screenwriter Guy Garner's original screenplay.

It was originally decided on a cooperative level that the film should resemble the barbarian paintings of Frank Frazetta. With this in mind, Producer Kurt Wagner set about finding precisely the right people to form the foreground of flesh and muscles so prevalent in Frazetta's work.

The locations chosen also added to the fantastic approach of the film. Shot entirely in the Tujunga Canyon area of the Santa Monica Mountains, the crew managed to find bizarre foothills and weird terrain to

[illegible] the [illegible]. The most spectacular setting is the Altar of Jones used at the conclusion of the film. Upon discovering an abandoned army installation, the crew of Sagan set about to convert it into an apocalyptic vision of the future.

That Sagan is a definite cult film is quite apparent. Wagner chooses some of the most visible and ultimately salient figures in the physical culture set. Shot on a low budget, Wagner and director Pyun hope that Sagan will enjoy a relative success on the "B" movie circuit.

The main thing going for Sagan is that it will be the first in a new wave of barbarian-type sword and sorcery films. The plan is to produce a sequel before the first film is even released. This shows the confidence that producers and distributors have in relation to these efforts. Sagan hopes to avoid a "PG" rating to maximize their audience without disappointing those who came to see the hint of the action and "cheesecake" associated with this genre in the past.

In the next several years, the Sword and Sorcery film will experience a renaissance, with Frazetta's efforts and Miller Subotsky's Warrior film. The light has become visible due to the growing acceptance of new forms of fantasy as legitimate formats of entertainment.

The majority of Sword and Sorcery literature is well rooted in the pulp era of the Thirties. With producers like Frazetta, Subotsky and Wagner, it is hoped that the conventions of writers like Robert E. Howard and others will finally be given proper interpretation.

Carl Ingram

Mediascene

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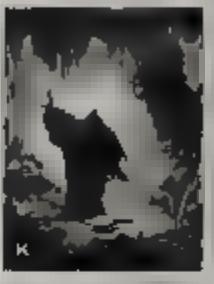
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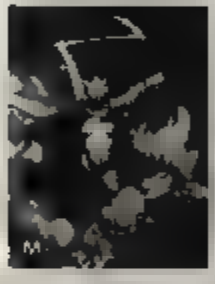
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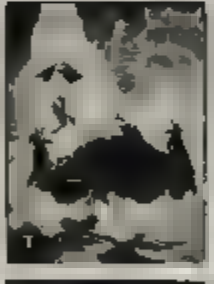
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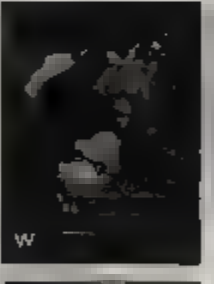
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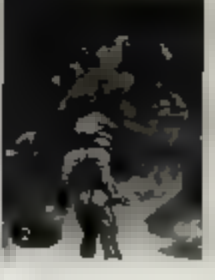
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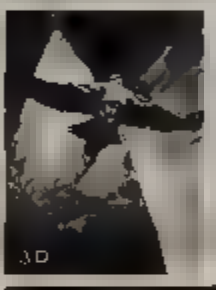

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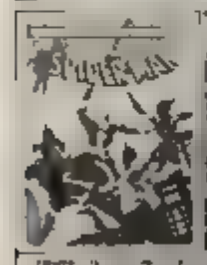
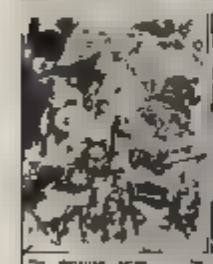
CONAN THE SYNDICATED

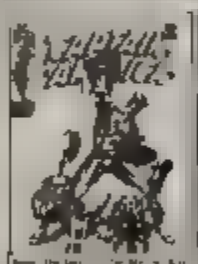
AN EXCLUSIVE MEDIASCENE PREVIEW OF JOHN BUSCEMA'S ART FROM THE OPENING WEEKS OF THE CONAN NEWSPAPER SERIES

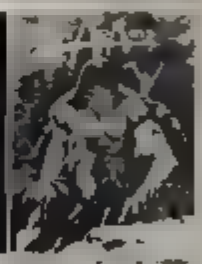
COMICS & COMIX





THE VIEW BEHIND THE SCENES WITH THE COMICS AND THEIR CREATORS





GOOD READING IN THE VERY BEST COMIC TRADITION !

The days of the 32-page comic book may be just about over as DC Comics contemplate major changes in the size, price and marketing of their entire line of titles. Artists and writers are already gearing-up their production schedules to accommodate 48-page stories and back-up feature length tales of 8 pages.

Various members of the comic book fan press have picked up on this information and begun to a blanket rumor campaign but according to DC's Public Relations Director Mike Gold "nobody has come up with the real story on this matter yet. We are investigating larger stories and page counts but nobody has arrived the story yet."

"Even we are not sure exactly what our future plans will take, because we have to present the ideas to Warner's finance people at a budget meeting on December 5 and 6. We will propose a scheme of mass expansion involving a total program providing more material for all our books. The real test will come when we try to convince Warner accountants to invest thousands of dollars that they won't see again for months.

Future Formats Forecast

"We have been investigating this type of move for over three months already and it involves changes on every level but the time has been well worth the effort. We just hope we get the Anniversary approval and that readers will respond to our attempts to improve the comic book's sales potential.

Apparently the chances of this expansion becoming reality are very good because the DC stable of contract artists and writers is augmented on an almost daily basis, and many more comic creators are heavily committed on a freelance basis. Marshall Rogers, Frank Giacoia, Dennis O'Neil and Cary Bates are all signed to the DC payroll, and freelance regulars include Jim Starlin, Len Wein, Howie Chaykin, Mike Kaluta and Johnny Craig.

Do the dollar comics really sell?

According to DC's Mike Gold they seem to have a somewhat cumulative effect not necessarily selling more on the regular newsstand but selling in more non-newsstand. The average increase in sales after two issues has been about 200% on mass grocery store mini-mart sales on G I Combat alone have skyrocketed 320% partly due to this increased marketing platform and partly due to Joe Kubert's strikingly effective covers. With the dollar price tag, more and more stories are being

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re-packaged or comics again thus increasing the audience that will see the books. Thus increasing the sales. The actual overall sales picture may not be significantly changed by these tabloid books as the superheroes are hijacked from newsstands so both may share the same number of comics that the distributor normally handles but 320% is a large and impressive number in an industry where success or failure often depends on 2 or 3 percentage points.

In fact the darkest cloud on DC's horizon appears to be the cancellation of the dollar sized Super-Team Family, as of issue #15. The story originally slated for issue #16 has been divided

and reshaped to fit in issues #14 and #15 of Superman featuring Supergirl and the Doom Patrol written by Gerry Conway. The reasons for cancellation include high sales, include the imminent unveiling of a brand-new superman teamup title, making the latest Kryptonian hyper-alien with almost a half-dozen appearances each month not including guest-star spotlights.

Replacing this canceled title will be the new expanded dollar version of Adventure Comics, featuring a continuing 7-page Deadman series by Wein and Adams and a brand new character created by Gerry Conway. Adventure will also feature a two-part Eclipso story by Wein and Joe Orlando

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temporarily returning to the pencilling task ended by writer Frank Giacoia.

Steve Ditko and Dave McKenzie have both presented new series ideas to DC that fall within the superhero framework but are more esoteric, not superheroes in the traditional sense. Ditko's character is still awaiting title approval but McKenzie's hero will be called "The Man From Nevermore" (no relation to the Richard Corben title).

Meanwhile Dracula Blade, The Changing Man continues as a rather stable DC title despite our report of its cancellation last issue (a classic case of an unimpressionable 00.0% solid source making a mistake. Sales [illegible] increasing in sales

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and may even achieve monthly status despite or because of) a very bizarre art and story. The book is really very strange," according to Mike Gold "so even we had to recheck our figures when the news appeared. As of November however issue 9 is in production and a circulation boost is under consideration.

Superboy and the Legion of Super-Heroes is becoming somewhat of an artist's showcase due to its 48-page book length story format. Issue 237 will feature a massive Walt Simonson illustrated tale followed by a truly strange issue which reprints Adventure Comics 369 and 380, in their entirety and without ads of any kind. Even the book's [illegible] have happened to make

COMIXSCENE

room for a wraparound panorama by Jim Starlin. Starlin returns in issue 239 to illustrate Paul Levitz king-size story and Howie Chaykin will handle the art for issue 240.

Both Starlin and Chaykin have made excessive commitments to DC, primarily due to their close associations with other artists who have already made the company switch.

In Starlin's case, the move was aggravated by differences of opinion concerning just how brightly the Hulk should be painted for the cover of Marvel's black and white magazine. Chaykin was similarly lured away by the freedom to create new characters for DC's many anthology and war titles.

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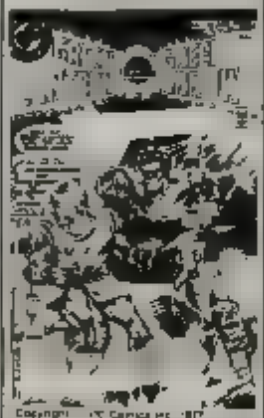
In addition to penciling and inking literally dozens of covers for DC, Starlin will also be involved in reviving an old Kirby character from a premature grave. OMAC, the One Man Army Corps, has attracted Starlin's attention as both a writer and artist, particularly since it was abruptly terminated in three hastily drawn panels on the last page of issue 8, leaving dozens of plots sub-plots and situations dangling on a flimsy excuse for a wrap-up. Starlin will continue the OMAC series where it left off in a 9-page mini-format, to be placed in one of the anthology books as soon as space becomes available.



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Sleeping Sandman Awakened

Meanwhile another Kirby character is being mysteriously resurrected after being rediscovered in a casual search of the files. Along with an unused Green Team, editor Al Milgrom found the unpublished story intended for **Sandman** 7 written by Mike Fleischer and penciled by Kirby. Milgrom plans to do a small tailoring job on the story and squeeze it into the Kamandi series for release sometime next Christmas, because the tale has a definite Holiday flavor. Though it is too late to hit this year's schedule.

Another artist resurfacing at DC lately has been Russ Heath, who has taken time off from car commercial storyboards at Continuity Associates and has not only penciled a chapter in an upcoming Wonder Woman battle spectacular but has begun inking Mike Golden's pencils with **Mister Miracle** 24. Russ may also return to illustrate a three-part comeback of Steve Savage: Balloon Buster from a script by Len Wein.

Wally Wood will begin appearing as DC's top inker in the next few months, after successfully completing his European commitments. Dramatize The World of the Wizard King. Wally was also in Hollywood for a short while, negotiating with Ralph Bakshi for an animated Wizard King film but has returned to the comics medium where he is best known and respected. Crammed into his busy work schedule though, Wally still intends to produce a limited edition portfolio for one of the many fan publishing companies featuring two subjects that he has spent a lifetime learning, practicing and refining into a state of artistic perfection (basically laced with tons of science fiction gadgetry: the portfolio is simply titled **Wood Art**.

Jim Aparo has turned into a real powerhouse penciller in the past few months, taking on more assignments than ever before. In addition to Len Wein's 12-page Deadman series, Aparo will return to illustrate Aquaman with issue 54, while maintaining his regular commitment to the **Brave and Bold**.

In their never-ending search for new comic outlets, DC has come up with a new marketplace in which to peddle their papers: The Pizza Hut. In one of the most unusual stunts of the decade, The Pizza Hut people are reprinting six 1950's comics, complete with the original house ads and replacing the paid advertising with plugs for their pizza. These are complete 32-page, full-color comics of no particular distinction (**Superman** #73, **Wonder Woman** 98, 99, and **Batman** #22, #23) with or without anchovies.

Len Wein has moved into DC's production schedule quite smoothly, marking a major coup in Jenette Kahn's continuing acquisition of top-line creators. The complete break from Marvel's first-string superhero line-up was not intentional but came about nevertheless. According to Len: "I originally wanted to work for both companies, and really wanted to get a Batman series. Both Marvel and DC agreed in principle to this arrangement but there were minor tensions, so I felt I ought to make a decision between the two. Since I had all the top Marvel heroes tied up and was writing myself out of gimmicks, I decided that it was time to switch over to the greater challenge of working at DC's less rigidly monitored and controlled characters."

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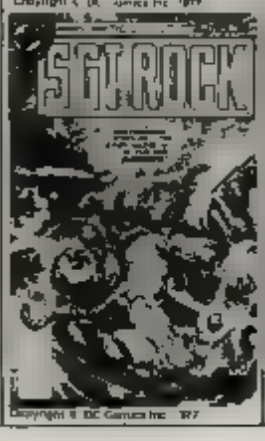

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Len will take over **Mister Miracle**, **Batman** (in **Detective**), **Deadman** and the return of The Human Target on a regular basis. He will also provide occasional Phantom Stranger stories for **House of Mystery** with Johnny Craig and Jim Aparo and has presented three new series ideas for consideration.

In the vacuum created by Wein's leaving, Marvel has had to restructure their work schedules. Marv Wolfman is taking over both **Spider-man** and **The Fantastic Four**; Roger Stern is

news/views/reviews from the world of comics

writing The Hulk. Doug Moench is signing on to guide the adventures of **Captain Marvel**. Roy Thomas will conjugate Titan's tangled Aggedorn verbs and Steve Gerber is taking over **Captain America**.

Virtually everybody is planning changes of some sort in their books as the superheroes shuffle will begin to take on a new look. Roy's Thor will enter little attention at this point. Walt Simonson will continue pencilling, following a one-issue John Byrne's fill-in.

Marv Wolfman contemplates the most pressing changes so far and Spider-Man will go through both personal and character building. Will Flash Thompson, Aunt May's [illegible] certainly continue to go with their Prince Namor when a he really wants is to get along with them. As an equal, share a few beers, play kids, a house with a clear plexiglass bubble under on his pedestal. The Sub-Mariner points out Sue Storm on a movie and another sub-par [illegible] she will accept him as an equal, maybe even above him a little. All of this [illegible] from Len's original plans. But thanks to the same 300th issue Dr. Doom confronts him in which Reed and Doom grudgingly work together to their own separate purposes before the slugging begins.

For really big [illegible] Wolfman's Dracula [illegible]

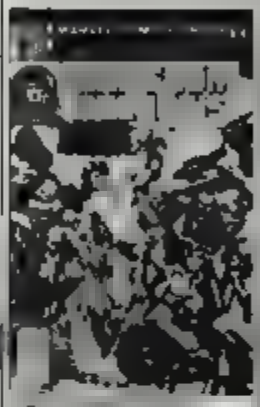
[illegible] issue 64 [illegible] in Hell where Dracula [illegible] on the Devil loses his [illegible] and is condemned [illegible] Roman Swords 66 gets [illegible] A shaggy start as a way of [illegible] evening, tries to entice the [illegible] and count into a close [illegible] [illegible] only to be interrupted [illegible] the Mafia searching for their [illegible] heroin. After a brief [illegible] with the underworld [illegible] Count who was a warrior [illegible] in the past Transylvania [illegible] destroys the mob [illegible] to be arrested and [illegible] thus giving Jeremy Harker proof of Dracula's [illegible] loss.

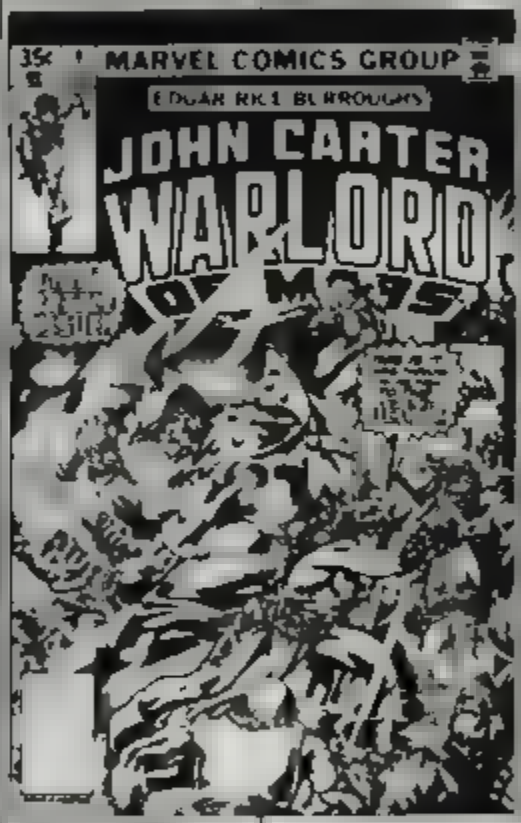
Dracula [illegible] plunges our hero into a [illegible] bar where he [illegible] has a sandwich and [illegible] a girl. Suddenly a [illegible] Dracula-stalker [illegible] the scene and forces him to help [illegible] a church where he dissolves [illegible] the only obvious [illegible] is continuing the [illegible] to [illegible] get his daughter to take him to the roof and return the [illegible] [illegible] Unfortunately [illegible] is enjoying her father's [illegible] heavens, in issue 67 and refuses to accommodate the [illegible] broken-down and [illegible] [illegible] Where will it all end?

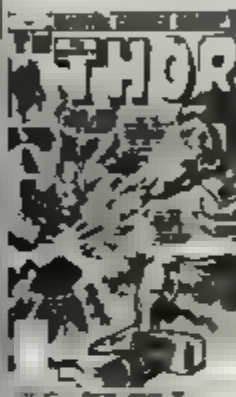
Wolfman hopes to put Dracula back on a monthly schedule soon now that Gene Colan has dropped the **Howard the Duck** newspaper series but Marvel is holding back on this move until the effect of Wolfman's leaving have settled.

John Carter [illegible] highly [illegible] the sprawling Air Pirates [illegible] Barsoom sequence and mark [illegible] a farewell to the series. The final chapter sees the valiant ones requiring Rudy Helmet and the spring Tridy to finish it by press time.

Future issues will feature a variety of artists with John Carter coming down and handle the series regularly. Issue 1 will be by Dave Cockrum and features recounting the origin of Dejah Thoris. John Carter 12 and 13 will be an Emile Chan fantasy what if type story of which the Indians who chased Carter into that famous cave on Earth) finally worked up their nerve to enter and found themselves transported to Barsoom for a







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news/views/reviews from the world of comics

Rich Rider is forced to retake his high school exams while his younger brother invents Factor X™ which can expose Nova's identity. Along the way Rich tries to clear his father of criminal charges, only to find he has been taken prisoner by the mob mercilessly driven by Infermo and Fairfax.

With every issue of **Nova** Infermo's artwork improves on the series until faithful fans can almost say the old Carmine is back. Unfortunately it has been over a decade since the old Carmine did comics that made any money which must bear at least part of the responsibility for the series roller-coaster sales charts Carmine has shown he is willing to update his thinking

however by swiping from some of the most successful artists around judging by the vintage 1958 gimmicks apparent in the last few issues copied from a major unusual source Carmine should be drawing 877 style comics in five or six years, providing comics can survive the wait

Marvel has put their **Beatles** color comic magazine into production and appears content to let the things represent their "Heavy Metal-type" magazine George Perez and Klaus Janson are drawing the **Beatles** magazine, with a script by Dave Kraft

Marvel's adaptation of **Close Encounters of the Third Kind** has Finally entered production with Archie Goodwin and

illustrated by Walt Simonson Unfortunately Spielberg's continual delays combined with Marvel's slow start on the project to set the publication date back around March 78 if **Close Encounters** flops Marvel can just take the book from the printer to the dump and cry alot if the film is a **Star Wars**-type hit, they will have lost valuable newsstand time and public terror during the intervening four months between the film and the comic

What it'll just keep rolling along. Someone avoiding is *What if Conan were Alive Today?* story instead, there will be a pair of fill-in tales revolving around *What if the X-Men Had Been Organized by Magneto* and *What if the World Knew Daredevil was Blind?* Both are edited by Roy whose busy schedule has been hitting more than a few snags lately

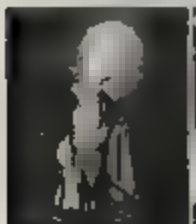
Between all the various Conan comic books, magazines and newspaper strips, **Tarzan**, **What If?** **The Invaders**, **Thor** and more, Thomas & also trying to break into the Hollywood film scene so there have been occasional lapses (noted as reprints) and some of the work is simply being passed to others under Roy's editorial supervision

One title that is leaving Thomas sphere of control is **Star Wars**, which he and Howie Chaykin rode to the top of the ladder of success through two (or three) separate comic printings two giant Treasury Editions and a very slim paperback Now both Roy and Chaykin are leaving the series turning it over to Archie Goodwin and Carmine Infantino with an inker still to be chosen Issue 9 will be the last Thomas Chaykin **Star Wars** They can never hope to match their initial success again, so it really is time for them to restart off to new frontiers, and let the imitators follow and flesh out the fantasy they helped create

This is the time of year when comic production slows down somewhat catching its breath for the coming summer sales push New ideas and projects are germinating and being discussed but the frantic drive to produce a reduced Stan has begun writing the 28-page Jack Kirby **Silver Surfer** book and Joe Sinnott is clearing his schedule to make room for the monumental inking task

By next issue, **Mediascene** will have the inside track on many of these developing and projects, including DC's expansion, Marvel's new color magazine and Byron Preiss latest visual publications

In the meantime, Jack Katz' newest volume of the **First Kingdom** is imminent, offering a wealth of epic fantasy entertainment and intricate artistic detail! Buy one and you'll buy them all because each book is only one chapter in a massive 24-book Novel of apocalyptic dimensions and scope Volume 7 has been completed and judging by an advance preview of the pages, should surpass his previous efforts in both art and storyline



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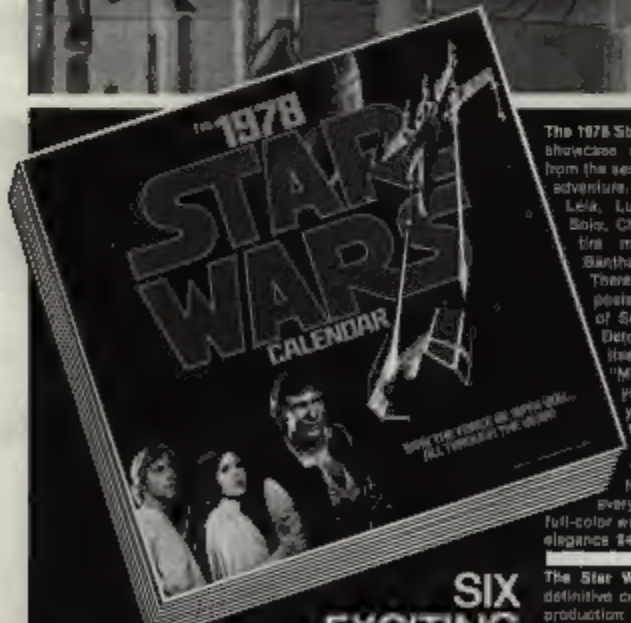
The Okefenokee Star Volume 2 features Kelly's work with across and includes Leading prints, critics and Publishers of works of Stream their appreciation of Pogo and its creator all highly illustrated with charmingly caustic pit cards critters and caricatures Based in a page-ing scene of legal books for just $3.50 plus 50 postage

FORCE YOURSELF!

Putting a man on the moon wasn't enough! It took **Star Wars** to make the world race for space! SUPERGRAPHICS is proud to present this selection of **Star Wars** books and posters, representing the first and finest photos and art available from the spectacular science fantasy space epic. More will be ready in the months to come, and these are the best of the items currently on the market.

If any single piece of art truly captures the spirit and adventure of **Star Wars**, it's this fantastic full-color poster by the brothers Hildebrandt. Symbolic, heroic, realistic and colorful, this **Star Wars Poster** is a brilliantly executed rendering of Luke Skywalker and Princess Leia defying the star-smashing power of Darth Vader. This poster is going sold for $5.00 and more in many stores, but you can get yours now for only $2.00 plus .50 postage.



The 1978 Star Wars Calendar is a showcase of full-color photos from the senses-shattering space adventure. Here are Princess Leia, Luke Skywalker, Han Solo, Chewbacca and an entire menagerie of Jawas, Banthas and Sandpeople. There's even a full-color poster size centerspread of See-Threepio and Artoo Detoo, and the calendar itself, which proclaims "May the Force be with you—all through the year." Each **1978 Star Wars Calendar** is 12" x13" in size, and opens to a total height of 24 inches, every month. The cover is full-color with a dash of silver for elegance. $4.95 plus .55 postage.

The Star Wars Portfolio is the definitive collection of full-color production paintings by artist/designer Ralph McQuarrie. This is an amazing selection of 21 color plates displaying McQuarrie's powerful designs and renderings, most of which were used by George Lucas in preparation for his spectacular film. Aerial battles, The Death Star and imaginative machinery are all intricately painted, and often present fresh new points of view in tight, dynamic compositions. There are even a few scenes and characters which did not show up in the film, but are too good to be left out. **The Star Wars Portfolio** reproduces these magnificent pieces of art suitable for framing, approximately 7"x15" each in a quality folder package—a gallery of behind-the-scenes graphics from the sci-fi film of the decade for just $7.95 plus .55 postage.

The Star Wars Sketchbook showcases the work of Joe Johnston, one of the technical artist/designers from the movie. His drawings combine futuristic concepts with practical technological insight, and occasionally flash with unexpected humor. This 96-page volume of Johnston's dazzling art not only shows **Star Wars**' early development, but also captures the vitality and excitement that eventually found its way to the screen. A stunning exhibition of art designed for the stars—only $4.95 plus .55 postage and handling.

Want to build an R2-D2 droid? Or maybe a full-size Millennium Falcon space freighter? Then you'll need a set of **Star Wars Blueprints**, twelve authentic separate designs that tell everything there is to know about the technical aspects of **Star Wars**' marvelous machinery. The **Blueprints** package is 7½"x9" in size and each print unfolds to 36½ packed with diagrams and specifications. Priced at $6.95 plus .55 postage, **The Star Wars Blueprints** will be ready in November. You really can't blast off without them!

The Newspaper of Science Fiction and Fantasy is a brand-new tabloid publication which has devoted its entire first issue to just one subject—**Star Wars**. This special edition features 24-pages of facts, photos and behind the scenes action. The spaceships, robots and creatures are exhaustively examined, with rare pictures and unknown facts to stimulate the imagination. There is even a full-color **Star Wars** centerspread featuring Luke, Obi-Wan, Han and Chewbacca, all for $1.00 plus .50 postage.

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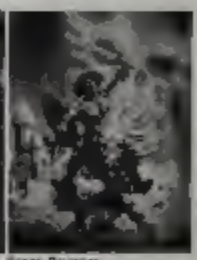

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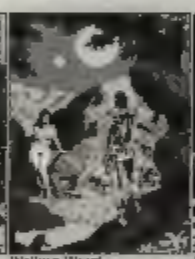

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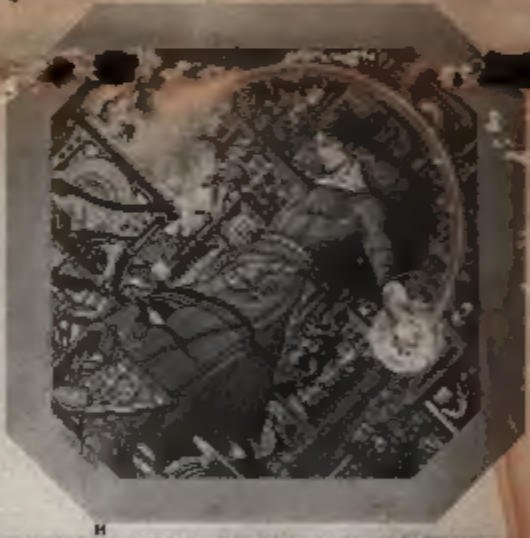

H

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A) CONAN — The spectacle! The savagery! The supernatural! Reproduced actual size (20"x23"), this is Smith's first new visualization of the invincible barbarian, Conan. $3.00 plus .75.

B) THE GORBLIMEY PRESS CATALOG is a two-year time capsule portfolio of Barry Smith's published works in 1974 and 1975, most of which are out of print. The book is 8½" x 11" with all pieces presented full page size. Smith has included a penetrating 4500 word critique on the progress and purpose of Gorblimey Press. Printed in two colors throughout, the GbP Catalog is $3.50 plus .50.

C) WHITHERING - a breathtakingly realistic black and white print of a demonic deathshead vision. A superior achievement of intricate detail, **Whithering** is 15" x 20" for $2.50 plus .50 postage.

D) THE LORD OF THE BLACK CORSAIRS is Smith's newest and most strikingly savage poster to date. Rep[illegible] [illegible] "Blue Conan" [illegible] of barbaric might for $4.00 plus .50 postage.

E) THE MOON & STAR BOOKMARKS are 8" high, and come in two different sets of five, with color borders. Tuck them in your favorite Conan novel or mat and frame them collectively. *Red* is a striking savage beauty brandishing sword and spear. *Blue* is a sequential midnight dance by a near-naked maiden. Order by color, $1.50 each, both for $2.50.

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H) PANDORA A curiosity must be satisfied . . . Smith captures this moment in a full-color print with a wide gold border. 24⅞" x 24⅞" in an octagonal format, these are the last of 1500 signed editions, mailed flat for $20.00 plus $2.00 postage, insurance.

I) DEVIL'S LAKE is an exceptionally beautiful and haunting print, in full-color on quality paper. An overpowering 25" x 25", **The Devil's Lake** is available unsigned for $5.00 plus .50, or signed and numbered, printed on heavier paper, and mailed flat and insured for $20.00 plus $2.00.